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CARIBBEAN SEA
A Chart
of the Captain Generalship
of
CARRACCAS.
Comprehending
the Provinces of
Venezuela, Maracaybo, Varinas,
Cumana, Guiana & the Island
of St. Margueritte.
St Vincent
Barbadoes
Grenades
Tobago
MARGUERITE
Toriguas
TRINIDAD
Cape Vela
Hordilla
Gulf of Paria
Gulf of Triste
Gulf of Cariaco
Gulf of Barcelona
Gulf of Buenos Ayres
Gulf of Maracaybo
Lake Maracaybo
Lake Valencia
Lake Tacarigua
Lake Parime
Lake Amucuro
Lake Cabruta
Lake Tamanaco
Lake Maracapana
Lake Equanopal
Lake Nerevarina
Lake Tacarigua
Lake Mamo
Lake Tacamahaca
Lake Tacarigua
Lake Parime
Lake Amucuro
Lake Cabruta
Lake Tamanaco
Lake Maracapana
Lake Equanopal
Lake Nerevarina
Lake Tacarigua
Lake Mamo
Lake Tacamahaca

TRAVELS

IN

PARTS OF

SOUTH AMERICA,

DURING THE YEARS 1801, 1802, 1803, & 1804;

CONTAINING

A DESCRIPTION OF THE CAPTAIN-GENERALSHIP OF CARRACCAS,

WITH

AN ACCOUNT OF THE LAWS, COMMERCE, AND NATURAL PRODUCTIONS OF THAT COUNTRY;

AS ALSO

A VIEW OF THE CUSTOMS AND MANNERS OF THE SPANIARDS AND NATIVE INDIANS.

BY

F. DEPONS,

AGENT FROM THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO CARRACCAS.

LONDON:

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1806.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

FROM the extreme jealousy of the Spanish Government, no stranger is permitted to land, far less to reside for any length of time, in any of their foreign settlements, especially on the American continent, without an express order to that effect from the king, which it is very difficult to obtain.

On the other hand, the Spaniards themselves, instigated by the prospect of immediate gain, held out to them by the mines of Mexico and Peru, flock in great numbers to these provinces; while the more eastern part of Terra Firma is regarded by these adventurers as comparatively of little value, though the fertility of its soil, and the richness and variety of its productions, are unequalled in any other part of America. As the whole Spanish nation, and even the government itself, appear in some measure to participate in this erroneous opinion respecting the true value of their American possessions, it cannot be matter of surprise, that no individual of that nation has hitherto devoted his talents and leisure to explore a country, which is regarded by his fellow citizens with perfect indifference. Hence that part of Spanish America, which forms the subject of the following work, is very imperfectly known to Europeans. To supply this deficiency, and to correct the inaccurate accounts respecting it, which have found their way into our best modern geographical works, is the

professed object of the present undertaking. The author's long residence in the provinces he describes, fitted him in a peculiar manner for the task he imposed on himself; while his official situation, and the esteem in which he seems to have been held by those at the head of the government of Carraccas, opened to him the most valuable and authentic sources of information.

The reason, M. Depons informs his readers, which led him to give the new appellation of the *Eastern Part of Terra Firma* to the country he describes, was, in order to distinguish it from the more westerly part, dependent on the vice-royalty of Santa-Fé, and which is bounded to the north by Cape Vela, and to the west by the isthmus of Panama.

TRAVELS

IN

SOUTH AMERICA.

DISCOVERY OF SOUTH AMERICA.—DIVISION OF THE CAPTAIN-GENERALSHIP OF CARRACCAS—TEMPERATURE—MOUNTAINS.—MINES.—PEARL-FISHERIES.—SALT.—MINERAL WATERS.—SEASONS.—RAINS.—EARTHQUAKES.—FORESTS.—PLANTS, GUMS, RESINS, AND MEDICINAL OILS.—LAKES.—RIVERS.—SEAS, TIDES, WINDS.—PORTS, BAYS, &c. &c.

Sagacity and Intrepidity of Columbus.

THE discovery of America justly appears to us, and must appear to the most remote posterity, an astonishing phenomenon, and its conquest almost a miracle.

Christopher Columbus, an enlightened and learned astronomer, had been led to conjecture, from the figure of the earth, that the existence of another hemisphere was essential to the equilibrium of the globe. The hints on this subject scattered through the works of the ancients, opened to his mind a vast field for meditation; his astronomical, geographical, and physical knowledge supplied the rest. Plato, Aristotle, Pliny, and Strabo had suggested to his mind the idea of a problem which his sagacity enabled him to solve, and of a project which his ardent love of glory impelled him to execute.

It is not my intention to enter upon the history of the different expeditions to South America, but to confine myself to the con-

sideration of the eastern part of Terra Firma and Spanish Guiana.

Of all the conquests made in the new world, in the name of the king of Spain, that of the country in question was the most tedious, arduous, and we may add, the most incomplete.

The mountainous nature of the ground, the numerous rivers, which often swell to such a degree as to cut off all communication between one part of the country and another for a considerable portion of the year, the lakes, marshes, and deserts, presented difficulties which only the most determined courage could have overcome. But what tended still more to retard the progress of the conquerors in several parts of America, was the number of small governments, which, unlike the extensive empires of Mexico and Peru, rendered the victories of the Spaniards less decisive, and their negociations more difficult. It was seldom that any of the numerous caciques formed a league amongst themselves: and still more seldom that they either offered or accepted a challenge to try their strength with the Spaniards in the open plains. The overthrow of a single tribe seldom gave to the conquerors possession of more than a few leagues of ground; and in order finally to gain a secure footing in the country, it was necessary to support the greatest privations, and to encounter the greatest dangers with exalted courage and unwearied perseverance.

It was during the third voyage of Columbus, in 1498, that he discovered that part of the continent, known under the name of Terra Firma. His intention was to proceed to the equator, but he was prevented by the calms which prevailed, and was carried along with the currents to the mouths of the Dragons, situated between the island of Trinidad and Terra Firma. Lopez de Gomara asserts that Columbus discovered all the coast as far as Cape Vela; but Oviedo, whose testimony I have always found worthy of credit, affirms that he only coasted Terra Firma as far as Point Araya, which bears north and south from the western point of Marguerite, whence he steered north for St. Domingo. Fernando Columbus, the admiral's son, relates that his father, after having discovered the gulph of Paria, steered along the coast of Terra Firma, west of the island of Testigos; after which he shaped his course towards Saint Domingo. From this concurrent testimony, it must be sufficiently obvious that the assertion of Lopez de Gomara is deserving of little credit.

From the account transmitted to the court of Spain, by Columbus, of his recent discovery of this part of Terra Firma, of the manners of the inhabitants, and of the richness of the country, particularly in pearls, the government was induced to grant permission to Captain Alphonso Oyeda still farther to pro-

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secute this discovery. He was accompanied in his voyage by Americus Vespusius, a man who has since enjoyed an usurped celebrity over Columbus, and who was instigated to this enterprize by cupidity rather than a love of glory. This expedition reached in twenty-seven days the land of Maracapana, in 1499, and afterwards proceeded along the coast as far as Cape Vela, entering the different ports in their course, with the view of taking an accurate survey of them. From Cape Vela he immediately returned to St. Domingo, according to Oviedo and Robertson; but some other authors relate that he previously revisited Maracapana, situated on the coast of Cumana.

On his return to Europe, Americus Vespusius found means to make it be generally credited, that he himself was the real discoverer of America, and that Columbus had only discovered some islands, which could be regarded in no other light but as avenues to the main land. This bold fabrication at first passed for truth; the name of this adventurer was given to the new world, which it still retains, notwithstanding the efforts of historians to restore to Columbus an honour so hard earned, and so justly his due.

DIVISION OF THE CAPTAIN-GENERALSHIP OF CARRACCAS.

That part of the new world which constitutes the Captain-Generalship of Carraccas, is more particularly the object of the present work. It comprehends the province of Venezuela in the centre, the government of Maracaybo to the west, Guiana to the south, the government of Cumana to the east, and the island of Marguerite to the north-east.

This department is bounded by the sea towards the north, from the 75° of long. west from the meridian of Paris, to the 62° that is, all the space from Cape Vela to the promontory of Megilones or of Paria; and to the east by the sea from the 12° to the 8° of north lat. Dutch Guiana and Peru form its boundary to the south; and the kingdom of Santa-Fé to the west.

TEMPERATURE.

From the situation of this country, which lies beyond the 12° of north lat. we might be led to imagine that its soil would be barren and parched, and that it would be nearly uninhabitable by the extreme heat; but here the temperature is so diversified by a variety of causes, that many places enjoy an uninterrupted spring; whilst in others the influence of the latitude is fully felt.

MOUNTAINS.

The difference of temperature evidently depends on a range of mountains, which stretching from the Andes of Quito,

crosses Merida and the district of Varinas, after which it trends northwards towards the coast; whence proceeding in an easterly direction, and gradually becoming less elevated, it terminates near the island of Trinidad.

The space occupied by these mountains, which cross the provinces of Carraccas, seldom exceeds fifteen leagues in breadth; in some places it is however twenty, but in none does it fall below ten. From their small degree of elevation they are in most places susceptible of cultivation, and adapted to become the residence of man; except the eastern Picacho near the Carraccas, and Tumeriquiri in the province of Cumana, the former of which is 1278, and the latter 935 toises above the level of the sea.

These inequalities of the ground necessarily produce great variety of temperature, which proves extremely favourable to different productions. On the mountains there uniformly prevails such a temperature as approaches to coldness. The immense valleys which they form are proportionably cool, according to their exposure, and the degree of elevation.

After traversing these mountains, which stretch from north to south, we arrive at immense plains, running from east to west, from the village of Pao, which is situated in the 67° of west longitude, from the meridian of Paris, to the very base of the mountains of Santa-Fé. They are bounded on the south by the great river Oroonoko, and by the country known under the name of Guiana. The heat experienced in these plains is excessive.

According to the generally received theory respecting the formation of primary mountains, those of Venezuela are not sufficiently elevated to be considered as belonging to this class, neither is their form sufficiently pyramidal, nor their sides destitute of verdure, which is a constant effect of the particles of earth being carried along with the rain waters; on the contrary, they are covered with a vigorous and abundant vegetation. Hence it is evident that they are composed of strata of different substances, formed by the hand of time. This opinion is farther strengthened by the calcareous matters found in these mountains, as well as marble, which is well known to be produced from the shells of madrepoores and other marine animals, that are only met with in secondary mountains, which derive their existence from some of the revolutions sustained by our globe. Humboldt has, notwithstanding, found in the mountain of Selle, the highest part of this chain, very pure granite, of which quartz, feld spath, and mica, are the constituent parts; which seems to prove at least, according to the theory of M. Pallas, that this mountain, is either primitive, or has emerged from the bosom of the deep at a much more early period than others of

the same chain. I shall not however enter upon this investigation, since it is only my intention at present merely to give a description of the country, and not to write a history of the globe.

MINES.

What has tended greatly to the prosperity of the provinces of Carraccas is, that every attempt of the Spaniards to work the mines of gold and silver discovered by the first conquerors, has been hitherto rendered abortive, by the repeated insurrections of the Indians, who beheld in these projects the total overthrow of their independence. If the provinces in question have been thus prevented from enjoying the transitory and fallacious wealth derived from the digging of the precious metals, they are fully compensated by the abundant productions of a fertile soil, which afford to them a secure and never failing source of affluence and prosperity.

In the district of Saint Philippe there are considerable mines of copper of a very superior quality; but they are not wrought to such an extent as to prove prejudicial to agriculture. Exclusive of the local consumption, they furnished in 1801, to Porto-Cabello, one hundred and seventy-one quintals for the purpose of exportation; and there is every reason to suppose, that had it not been for the war, the quantity would have been still more considerable.

PEARL FISHERY.

On the first discovery of Terra Firma, the pearl fishery constituted a lucrative branch of commerce to the country, and furnished a considerable revenue to the king. It was carried on between the little island of Cubagua and that of Marguerite, and proved little less injurious, in its consequences, to the Spaniards and Indians than working in the mines. The isle of Cubagua is wholly destitute of wood and water, and displays such an appearance of sterility, that nothing but the extreme cupidity of the Spaniards could have induced them to form a settlement upon it. Fortunately circumstances soon occurred which induced them to abandon the pearl fishery, which has never since been resumed. It is even affirmed by the Spaniards that no pearls are now to be found along the eastern coast, until they reach a bay situated between Cape Chichihacoa and Cape Vela, which is occupied by the Guahoirs Indians, who dispose of their pearls to the English and Dutch.

SALT.

This article is produced in the northern side of the province

of Venezuela, in a considerable quantity, and of a very beautiful white colour; but it is at Araya where it is procured in the greatest abundance, and of quality far superior to that of any other part of America, not even excepting Turk's island. It will be seen in the chapter on imposts that it is farmed or sold on account of the king: yet it is truly astonishing what a trifling revenue is derived from a source which might with moderate industry be rendered so productive.

MINERAL WATERS.

These provinces abound in both cold and warm mineral springs, some of which are alkaline, others acidulous, and several of them of a chalybeate nature. They are very little known, and not much frequented by invalids, on account of most of them being at a great distance from the inhabited part of the country.

The heat of some of these springs approaches nearly to that of boiling water. The temperature of those near the old road between Porto-Cabello and Valence is 72°, and that of another in the valley of Aragoa is still higher.

SEASONS.

In South America spring and autumn are alike unknown; here the year is merely divided into summer and winter, or to speak more accurately, into the rainy and dry seasons. The former commences in May and terminates in November; during the other six months of the year rains are much less frequent, and sometimes the drought is very considerable.

RAIN.

It has been estimated that nearly an equal quantity of rain falls in the provinces of Venezuela, Cumana, and Guiana. Both the high and low grounds partake of the inconveniencies, and share the benefits of these rains, which, however, are not constant. Sometimes a whole day will pass without a single drop, while on others it rains without intermission. During the wet season it rains on an average, according to the most accurate calculation, three hours every day, and this most frequently happens after mid-day. Hence we never experience the drizzling showers of the polar regions; the rain pours down in torrents, causing the rivers to overflow their banks during the greatest part of this season: the ravins which are dry all the rest of the year, become also at this period immense torrents; and the plains are in many places laid under water, so that the traveller can only observe the summits of the highest trees, which serve to him as kind of land-marks. These inundations occur chiefly in the plains

north of the Oroonoko, and cover a space of ground from forty to a hundred and fifty leagues.

EARTHQUAKES.

It has been remarked by the inhabitants of these provinces, that the rains which fell previous to 1792, were uniformly accompanied by tremendous thunder storms; but since that period, though the rains be more copious, similar storms never occur. It seems highly probable that to a surcharge of electric matter, attracted from the atmosphere by the neighbouring mountains, were owing the dreadful earthquakes which proved so destructive to Cumana in December, 1797.

Neither Maracaybo nor Porto-Cabello have experienced any earthquakes since 1778 and 1779, if we except a few slight shocks in 1800 and 1801.

This part of South America, although situated between the Antilles and Peru, where earthquakes are so common, nevertheless enjoys an exemption from such calamities, that might be deemed miraculous, were it not a well known fact, that the air here being more dense is unfavourable to the action of electricity, and that the earth contains within itself fewer of the principles of fermentation and combustion.

On the first of May, at eleven o'clock at night, there was felt at Carraccas a very violent shock of an earthquake, with a vibratory motion of the earth from east to west; on the twentieth of the same month, about four in the evening, another shock was experienced, during which the earth seemed, as it were, to heave up and down for the space of a minute; and on the fourth of the following July, at 48 minutes past two in the morning, two very violent shocks were felt, and on the same day another was perceived, but less violent, at 35 minutes after six.

FORESTS.

The mountains of Venezuela produce the same kind of trees as the Antilles, as well as many others which are indigenous. The vast forests with which they are covered, might furnish for a succession of ages, timber for ship-building, if the nature of the country and the state of navigation did not render it too expensive to the mother country. All the timber employed in refitting and building of ships, is transported by the rivers Tocuyo and Yaraqui to Porto-Cabello, which is situated about fifteen leagues to windward.

A little to the windward of the mouth of the river Tocuyo, in the latitude of the small islands Tucacas, timber-yards might be readily established, on account of the proximity of the forests

in that quarter ; but the demand is so small as to afford little encouragement for their erection.

At Maracaybo they employ wood of a quality superior to any other in Terra Firma, for the purpose of ship-building. In this village the ship-carpenters find constant employment, and there would be room for many more hands, if the bar at the mouth of the harbour did not prevent vessels of a large burden from sailing out of it.

These forests likewise abound in various kinds of wood, fit for the use of the joiner and the cabinet-maker. In general they prefer that which the Spaniards term *pardillo*, for beams, rafters, door-posts, gates, &c. In some places they substitute for the pardillo, the *Quercus cerris*, Lin.

The cabinet-makers mostly employ cedar-wood for the purpose of making doors, window-frames, common tables, chairs, &c. In these forests are likewise found various species of wood, which from the high degree of polish of which they are susceptible, are well calculated for ornamental furniture ; among others is distinguished the black ebony, which grows in several places, but particularly on the banks of the river Totondoy, which flows into the east side of the lake of Maracaybo. It is there where nature appears to have established a nursery of trees calculated to supply the wants and to administer to the pleasure, and even to the caprice of man. The yellow ebony is more common than the former in the forests of Terra Firma, as well as the red ebony. The Spaniards term the black ebony *ebano*, the yellow *palo, amarillo*, and the red *granadillo*. Mahogany is neither found in such abundance in Terra Firma, as in the French part of St. Domingo, nor can it be compared with it in the beauty and richness of its veins, or the high polish of which it is susceptible.

In works which require wood of great durability, they employ iron wood, *sideroxylum*. It serves for the axle-trees of mill-wheels, the rollers or frames of the cylinders employed to express the sugar canes, &c. This species of wood is common in every part of Terra-Firma, except in the valley of Aragoa. The red ebony is also sometimes employed by the Spaniards for similar purposes, and it is affirmed even to exceed the iron wood in durability.

The only woods calculated for the dyer hitherto found in this country, is the Brasil wood, which abounds between Victoria and Saint Sebastian of los Reyes, and fustic, which is mostc ommonly found in the neighbourhood of Maracaybo. The inhabitants of Merida, without the aid of any other substance, dye with it a variety of colours, which are as lively and durable as they can be rendered by art. In proportion, however, as man shall penetrate into the immense forests of this country, which at

present are the exclusive habitation of reptiles and wild animals, new productions must be discovered, calculated to enrich the arts and to augment commerce.

PLANTS, GUMS, RESINS, AND MEDICINAL OILS.

The above observation is equally applicable to the gums, resins, medicinal oils, &c. of Terra Firma. Were enlightened naturalists and able botanists sent out at the expence of the government to explore this rich and fertile country, the result of their labours would doubtless not only prove beneficial to humanity, but would likewise tend to the promotion of science, and the increase and extension of commerce. At present the cocoa oil, which is prepared in the province of Cumana alone, considerably exceeds the internal consumption.

Notwithstanding the numerous species of medicinal vegetables and plants, profusely scattered over this extensive continent, there were only exported in 1796, from the port of Goayre, the only one which at that time enjoyed the privilege of a free trade with the mother country, four hundred and twenty-eight pounds of sarsaparilla, with which the plains and vallies are covered; five hundred pounds of tamarinds, which may be collected every where in the greatest abundance; and two hundred and thirty-nine pounds of Peruvian bark *(Cinchona officinalis,)* which last is indeed not very common in this part of the continent.

It should seem however that their exports have not lessened since that period; for in 1798 the amount of the cargoes sent by neutral ships, which on account of the war were then suffered to enter the port of Goayre, was three thousand six hundred and sixty-four pounds of sarsaparilla, and three thousand four hundred pounds of resins. In 1801 they exported from Porto-Cabello two thousand, three hundred and eighty-four pounds of sarsaparilla, and forty-seven thousand nine hundred and sixty-nine pounds of guiacum. But the number of these articles is trifling, and the quantity which was really exported, extremely insignificant in comparison with the profusion and variety of the vegetable productions in the provinces of Carraccas.

LAKES.

As the description of a country necessarily includes every thing that can tend to convey a just idea respecting it, we must not omit to notice the lakes which are produced by a collection of rain water, as well as those which are merely formed by the reservoirs of rivers. Many of the first species are met with in the low lands, in the vicinity of the Oronooko; the most magnificent of the second kind are those of Maracaybo and Valence, which appear to merit a particular description.

LAKE OF MARACAYBO.

According to Oviedo this lake is about fifty leagues in length, nearly thirty in its greatest breadth, and its circumference exceeds one hundred and fifty. It seems to have owed its formation to the slow and successive excavation produced in the land by the numerous rivers which flow into it from the east, the west, and the south. It is navigable for ships of the greatest burden; and by means of the rivers which disembogue themselves into it, the town of Maracaybo is supplied with provisions of all kinds either for its own consumption or for exportation. Storms seldom occur on this lake, but it is continually subject to a kind of undulatory motion, which appears to be in proportion to the action of the winds on its surface; and during sudden squalls, particularly when it blows from the north, canoes and other small craft are frequently overset and lost. At such times only the water of the lake, as far as the town, becomes brackish; for in general it is perfectly fresh and potable, even when taken up near the sea.

All the different species of fish found in the rivers of South America, also abound in this lake, except the tortoise, which, however singular it may appear, is found every where else.

To the north-east of the lake, on the most sterile parts of its banks, near a place called Mena, there are several inexhaustible pits of mineral tar, which seems in all respects the same as the *pix montana*, the asphaltus of the ancients. This bituminous matter mingled with suet is employed for paying the sides of ships and various other purposes.

The exhalations which arise from these bituminous minerals, so readily take fire in coming into contact with atmospheric air, that they throw out a pretty vivid light during the whole night. It has been remarked that this phenomenon is more constant during great heats, than when the weather is less sultry. These lights are styled by the inhabitants *the lantern of Maracaybo*, because they serve as a pharos to the Spaniards and Indians who navigate this lake without a compass or instrument of any kind.

The sterility, and still more the insalubrity of the banks of this lake, have hitherto prevented them from being inhabited. Even the Indians prefer living in a sort of floating huts upon the lake itself, which they construct of a durable species of wood similar to the iron wood. According to the testimony of Oviedo, which is confirmed by that of the inhabitants themselves, every portion of this wood which is under the water becomes petrified in a very few years.

The Spaniards, on finding many of these aquatic villages constructed without order, but with a considerable degree of solidity,

gave to them the name of Venezuela, which is the diminutive of Venice; an appellation that has since been transferred to the province. It was long supposed that these habitations had been constructed as a place of security against the wild animals, with which the country abounded; but this is now discovered to be an error, as the Indians refuse to abandon them for others ashore, although every idea of danger from the approach of wild beasts is at an end.

Since 1529, when Alfinger carried devastation and death among the peaceful inhabitants of the lake, these numerous villages have all disappeared, except four, which are situated on its eastern extremity, at unequal distances from each other. They are named *Lagunillas*, *Misoa*, *Tumoporo*, and *Moporo*. There is a church upon the water, in which a pastor performs service, and distributes spiritual aid to these aquatic Indians; but it is far from being a desirable situation, since seldom a few days elapse before his health begins to suffer, and scarce a single instance can be recollected in which the life of any of their clergymen was prolonged beyond six months.

These Indians sometimes come ashore in search of provisions, but their chief subsistence is on fish. They also find a considerable resource in the wild ducks, which abound on this lake, and which they take in a very singular and ingenious manner. For this purpose they constantly allow empty calebasses to float on the lake around their habitations; in order that these birds, by being habituated to see them, may not be intimidated. When an Indian wishes to procure any of these fowls, he puts on his head a calebasse, perforated so as to permit him to see without being seen. In this manner he goes into the lake, keeping always his head above the surface of the water, but taking care that no part of his body shall be visible; he proceeds thus swimming to the spot where the wild ducks are collected in the greatest number, then seizing them by the feet, he immediately drags them below the water, so that they have neither time to cry out, nor to make any motion which can warn the others of the impending danger. As fast as they are taken he fastens them to his girdle; and never thinks of retiring, till his wants be fully satisfied. Such a mode of entrapping these animals is attended with this advantage, that it does not frighten them, and may always be renewed at pleasure, and without expence. The fertility of the soil, on the west side of the lake, has induced a few Spaniards to brave the inclemency of the air, and a raise a few plantations of cocoa and other provisions. In the center of these scattered habitations, stands a chapel, in which a pastor performs divine service, and administers the sacrament.

The land on the southern side of the lake, remains altogether

uncleared, and is wholly destitute of inhabitants. The climate on the northern side is as intensely hot as the others; but it is incomparably more healthy. The town of Maracaybo stands on the left side of this lake, towards the west; and directly fronting it are two villages called *Punta de Piedra* and *Altagracia*. The former of these is inhabited by Indians, the latter by Spaniards.

LAKE OF VALENCE.

This lake is less extensive, but it displays a much more agreeable aspect, than that of Maracaybo: its shores are also more fertile, and the climate more salubrious, and of a milder temperature. The lake of Valence is upwards of thirteen leagues in length, and about four in its greatest breadth. Its form is that of an oblong square. It is situated about a league from the town of Valence, and in a valley hemmed in by mountains on all sides, except on the western, towards the interior of the country. The numerous rivers that flow into it have no visible outlet. It is about six leagues distant from the sea, and the intermediate space, by which they are separated, is occupied by almost inaccessible mountains. We find it very difficult to conceive, how this lake should have no visible out-let, while rivers flow into it in all directions; a circumstance which seems to prove that it is merely a basin. But how then on this supposition can we explain why it has remained of the same dimensions for a succession of ages? Can it be supposed that evaporation alone, however great it may be between the tropics, is equivalent to carry off the water which so many rivers pour into it? The supposition is altogether incongruous, when we consider the small extent of the lake's surface. Hence it should seem that there must be some subterraneous vent, by means of which a quantity of water equal to that which is poured into it continually escapes. This opinion, though only conjectural, is yet supported by such strong probabilities, as to give to it every appearance of truth. It is observed that vessels sailing on the lake move very swiftly from the shore to the center, while in returning much more time and exertion are necessary. Are we not warranted to infer from this fact, that there exists at the bottom of the lake an opening by which the water finds an exit? Hence we may readily explain why it has not become augmented in proportion to the volume of water which it constantly receives. The same supposition will also account for the great diminution which this lake appears to have undergone within a very few years: for we have only to suppose, that a greater quantity of water than formerly now finds its way through the out-let in question, and the phenomenon is satisfactorily explained. But without

having recourse to such an hypothesis, we find an easy solution of the successive and rapid diminution above-mentioned in the numerous cuts, made by the inhabitants, into the rivers in the vicinity of this lake, for the purpose of watering their plantations. These waters being diffused over a greater extent of ground, are either evaporated or expended in the production and support of different vegetables.

In proportion as the lake diminishes, new soil is exposed, which being composed of various substances that have been deposited on it for ages, possesses a wonderful degree of fertility. This new soil is preferred by the planter to every other for his agricultural operations.

The east side of the lake is planted with tobacco on account of the king. There are plantations of this kind which give employment to fifteen thousand individuals. The remainder of this alluvial soil is appropriated to different species of culture.

Numerous species of birds inhabit the environs of the lake; many of which are remarkable not only for the extreme beauty of their plumage, but for the variety and sweetness of their notes. The vast abundance of water fowl contributes also to render the country in the vicinity of the lake still more agreeable. But the perpetual verdure which embellishes its banks, as well as the various productions which cover them, excite sensations of pleasure in the mind of the beholder, which are altogether indefinable.

Vessels of different sizes are regularly employed to waft over the lake different kinds of provisions, which are raised on its shores, or on those of the rivers, that discharge their waters into it. Its navigation is not however unattended with difficulty, not only on account of the cause already assigned, but on account of the numerous islets which are interspersed in the lake, and which render the use of sails almost inavailable.

Many of these little islands have perceptibly increased in proportion to the diminution of the lake. They are all inhabited; that known under the name of Caratapona contains a population fully adequate for its cultivation. Here there is an abundant spring of water, much superior in quality to that of the lake. On being applied to the hands it produces the same effect, as water impregnated with lye. This saponaceous quality may perhaps depend on the quantity of animal and vegetable matter which it contains, and which is continually undergoing the process of decomposition.

There is plenty of fish in this lake, but not many different species. That which the Spaniards call *guavina* is the most abundant. There is likewise the bagre, *silicus bagre*, Lin. and another termed by the Spaniards bava, *blennius pholis*, Lin.

The shores of the lake abound with reptiles of various kinds, among which are particularly distinguishable two species of lizards; one of these the guana, termed in Spanish *mattos*, is considered by some of the Spaniards themselves, as well as by the Indians, a most delicious morsel. The early prejudices of youth which had induced me to rank this animal with serpents, toads, &c. always prevented me from eating it; though I have often witnessed that neither the Spaniards nor the Indians, were affected with any similar disgust.

I was unacquainted with this circumstance, when one day being much oppressed with the heat as I strolled along the banks of the lake of Valence, I resolved to repose myself for a few hours in one of the houses inhabited by a family of Indians. I immediately after my arrival I observed the chief take his bow and quiver. On enquiring the reason of this he told me he was going to procure something for dinner, and in about an hour returned with a large guana. This worthy Indian appeared at first extremely mortified on my refusing to partake in his repast, but on explaining my reasons for declining his hospitality, he laughed very heartily. The lizard after being skinned and boiled was served up, and constituted the only dish at the table of this family.

RIVERS.

After having spoken of the lakes, the rivers fall next in order to be noticed. In a mountainous country like that under consideration, where the rains are so abundant, we may naturally expect to meet with numerous rivers; and in fact there is no place more favoured in this respect than the eastern part of Terra Firma.

All those which originate in the chain of mountains formerly mentioned, and flow from the south to the north, discharge themselves into the sea; while those which have their source in the southren side of the same chain flow towards the valley, and pour their waters into the Oroonoko. The first are sufficiently hemmed in by steep natural embankments, while the second running in shallow beds overflow their banks, and during the greatest part of the year inundate the neighbouring plains.

It is my intention at present only briefly to notice the most remarkable of these rivers, deferring until I come to treat of Guiana, the consideration of the Oroonoko and the different rivers which flow into it. From Cape Vela to Maracaybo, there is not any river of much importance. It has been already observed that this lake appears to have been produced by the waters that flow into it from almost every quarter.

GUIGUES.

Sixteen leagues to the east of Coro is the river Guigues; it flows past the village of Guigues de la Yglesia, which stands at the distance of six leagues from its mouth, and is navigable as far as this village by canoes and other small craft; but owing to the sterility of the land in its neighbourhood, this circumstance is unattended with any advantage to the inhabitants.

TOCUYO.

This river disembogues itself into the sea twenty-five leagues farther to the east than the former. Its source is about fifteen leagues south of Carora, more than sixty leagues from the sea. Tocuyo is navigable as far as Banagua, a village situated on its banks, at the distance of forty leagues from its mouth. It is by means of this river that they transport the wood required for ship-building, with which its environs abound; and if the extreme sloth of the inhabitants did not prevent them taking advantage of the fertility of the soil, they might very profitably engage in other branches of commerce.

AROA.

The mouth of this river is ten leagues to windward of that of Tocuyo. Canoes may proceed up it a short distance from the sea, but the navigation is neither safe nor useful.

YARACUY.

In ascending along the shore of Aroa, we perceive at the distance of three leagues from its mouth, the river of Yaracuy. It originates forty leagues to the south, but only deserves the name of a river when it has reached within two leagues to the east of Saint-Philippe. It is at this place where it becomes navigable, and whence the inhabitants begin to transport the different commodities produced in the vallies of Saint-Philippe and in the plains of Barquisimeto, which are sent by sea to Porto-Cavallo, the nearest port.

TUY.

From Yaracuy no navigable river is met with until we reach Tuy, which flows into the sea thirty leagues to the eastward of Goayre. This river takes its rise in the mountains of San Pedro, ten leagues from Carraccas. It flows along the vallies of Aragoa between Victoria and Cocuisas, and afterwards through those of Tacata, Cua, Sabana of Ocumare, Saint-Lucia, and Saint-Theresa, and at last forms a junction with the Goayre:

these united rivers are navigable for ships of considerable burden, which serve to transport the produce of the neighbouring vallies, chiefly consisting of cocoa, of a superior quality. The inundations of this riverare more extensively destructive than those of any other in the district of Carraccas. A plan was presented to the government in 1803, by an enlightened pilot, named Pedro Caranza, pointing out the means proper to be pursued in order to confine it within proper limits; but this plan, however judicious, has not hitherto been acted on.

UNARE.

After leaving Tuy there is no river to the windward of sufficient importance to arrest the attention before reaching Unare. This river serves as the line of demarkation between the governments of Carraccas and Cumana. It is navigable as far as the village of Saint-Antonio de Clarisas, situated six leagues from the sea. It is forty leagues in length, and runs from south to north.

NEVERI.

This river is sixteen leagues to the east of Unare. It originates in the mountains of Brigantin twenty leagues south from its mouth. Owing to its size, and the great declivity of its bed, it is only navigable as far up as Barcelona, or very little higher.

MANZANARES.

Pursuing our course along the east bank of the Neveri, we reach at ten leagues distant from its mouth, that of Manzanares, which washes the walls of Cumana. It is this circumstance alone which renders it worthy of notice, since it only admits very small shallops to come up as far as the city, which is situated not above a quarter of a league from the sea. It serves, however, to irrigate and fertilize the adjoining lands, which would be otherwise extremely unproductive.

CARIACO.

Near Cumana we discover the gulph of Cariaco, into which several streamlets, and a large river bearing the same name, pour their waters. It flows past a city to which the Spaniards gave the name of Saint-Philippe. But in spite of every effort made by the government to this purpose, it still retains the name of the lake, from which it is only distant two leagues. This river is only navigable as far as the city of Cariaco, and that merely during the rainy season, at which period it sometimes overflows its banks, so as greatly to incommode the inhabitants. According to the tradition of the Indians, the gulph of Cariaco was formed by an earthquake.

GUARAPICHE.

Along the north side, as far as Cape-Paria, which forms with the Isles of the Dragons, the great entrance north of the gulph of Paria, there is not a single navigable river. Among those which pour their waters into this gulph, the most considerable is Guarapiche, which takes its rise in the eastern side of the mountain of Brigantin. This river is navigable for ships of considerable burden, as far as the forks of Tantasma, and they might even proceed higher up, were it not for the obstructions thrown in their way by the large trees blown down by the winds, and drifted along by the current: such obstacles the inhabitants have little temptation to remove, since the neighbouring lands produce little else except wild fruits.

Besides the rivers which disembogue themselves into the sea, the upper or northern part of the provinces of Venezuela and Cumana are intersected in every direction by various others of different dimensions, which form a junction with the former, in some part of their course; while the inferior or southern part of these provinces are also covered with rivers, running from north to south, and discharging their waters into the Oroonoko. The most considerable of these are the Mamo, Pariagoan, and Pao, the Chavita and Zoa, Cachicamo, Aracay, Manapire, Espimo, and lastly the river Apure, which flows into the Oroonoko by several mouths. It receives in its course an infinite number of streams, which forming a kind of fan, occupy a space of more than thirty leagues to the south of the province of Venezuela. The greatest part of these rivers are navigable for forty or fifty leagues from the point where they flow into the Oroonoko, along with the river Apure.

SEA.

The sea which washes the shores of this part of Terra-Firma, is termed by the English the Caribbean Sea, because, in fact, the chain of the Antilles from Trinidad to Cuba and Terra-Firma, forms a belt, which is bounded by the country formerly occupied by the Caribs. It is somewhat surprizing that none of the other European nations have adopted this denomination, which is so well calculated to distinguish a particular point of the globe, that is vaguely comprehended by them under the name of the North Sea.

TIDES.

The tides along the north coast from Cape Vela to Cape Paria, are so imperceptible as never to enter into the consideration of the navigator; while, on the contrary, all along the

eastern coast, from this last mentioned cape, as far as Dutch Guiana, they are so strong as considerably to influence the sailing of vessels in these latitudes. This singularity can only be imputed to the bearings of the coast.

WINDS.

The winds are much more regular upon the coasts, than in the interior of the country, where their direction is impeded by the nature of the land and other circumstances. The wind which usually blows on these coasts is the same as that which prevails between the tropics from north-east to east, known under the name of the trade winds. There is, however, this difference, that at sea these winds are constant, whereas on the coast they only prevail from nine or ten o'clock in the morning until the evening, when they are superseded by the land breeze, which blows in the contrary direction.

All the ports in these seas are infested by a species of ship-worm, known by the name of *tarets*, and said to have been brought to the Antilles from Europe. A vessel not sheathed with copper, cannot remain long in any of the ports without being so much damaged by these worms as to be unfit to put to sea. Covering the ships frequently over with a mixture of tallow and tar, while they remain in port, is reckoned the best preservative against the depredations of these reptiles.

Another inconvenience common to all the ports in the provinces of Carraccas, is being constantly exposed to violent and opposite currents, which do not appear to be influenced by the winds, but which are neither less inconvenient nor dangerous on that account. The road and harbour of Porto Cavallo, are an exception to the above observation, and afford a safe and convenient asylum to ships of every description.

PORTS.

We now proceed to notice the principal ports in the same order we formerly considered the rivers.

PORTETE AND BAYAHONDA.

At the distance of five leagues to the east of Cape Vela, a harbour called Portete is situated, into which small vessels only can enter; but four leagues farther to windward there is another port termed Bayahonda, in which vessels of any burden may anchor and ride in perfect safety.

The anchorage ground in both these ports is extremely good, but the Spaniards derive not any advantage either from the one or the other, as they are both in possession of the native Indians.

The pearls which these Indians obtain in the road of Bayahonda constitute the only traffic which they carry on with the Dutch and English.

MARACAYBO.

The first port we reach on pursuing the course of the coast as it trends towards the east, is that of Maracaybo.

A bar of sand, with only ten or twelve feet of water, which is constantly shifting, while it prevents the admission of large ships, renders even the entrance of small vessels very difficult. Immediately on clearing the bar, we obtain however a sufficient depth of water and a secure port.

CORO

Is a port open from the north to the north-east. Here ships may anchor in any depth, as the water gradually becomes more shallow the nearer we approach the shore. This port, however, is little frequented, being neither a place of much trade, nor possessing any superior advantages in itself.

PORTO-CAVALLO

Is not only one of the best harbours on all this coast, but perhaps in all America. It is so capacious that the whole Spanish marine might find shelter in it at the same time. It is completely protected from the fury of the winds from whatever quarter they may blow. The land by which it is surrounded on the south, the east, and on the west, is very elevated, and the two points, which form its entrance from the north. are so situated as to shelter it perfectly from the north-east wind.

The anchorage-ground, which owes nothing to art, is so extremely commodious, that ships of the greatest burden may approach close to the shore, so that loading and unloading may be performed without the assistance of boats or other small craft.

TURIAMO, PATANEMO, BORBURATA, AND SIENEGA.

About three leagues to the windward of Porto-Cavallo is situated the bay of Turiamo, which extends nearly one league in length from north to south. Ships seldom frequent this bay, because it is not well sheltered on the north, and because the neighbouring country affords not any supply of provisions, nor commodities of any kind so as to induce them to enter it. What has been already said respecting Turiamo applies equally to the bays of Patanemo, Borburata, and Sienega. The whole population in each of these places, consists merely of a small military force, to prevent contraband trade.

OCUMARE.

The bay of Ocumare, about five leagues east from Porto-Cavallo is very commodious, and well-sheltered, especially on the north. It affords excellent anchorage, and is protected towards the east by a battery of eight guns.

The village of Ocumare stands about three miles from the harbour, near which runs a river of the same name, which after contributing to fertilize the adjoining vallies, empties itself into the bay near the fort.

Between the bay of Ocumare and Goayre, are situated several small ports, the inhabitants of which carry on some trade with Goayre and Porto-Cavallo; but none of these ports are of sufficient importance to deserve particular notice.

GOAYRE.

Of all the ports on this coast, that of Goayre is the most frequented, while it is at the same time the worst. This road is so exposed to the fury of the winds, that ships are often driven from their anchors, and greatly injured. Strong currents are also very prevalent, which, joined to the influence of the winds, greatly contribute to augment the inconveniencies of this port. The depth of water is no more than eight fathoms within a quarter of a league from the shore. The current here runs so strong, as not only to render lading and unlading tedious, difficult, and expensive, but even frequently impossible. These however are not the only inconveniencies that attend this port. The currents appear to act with less violence at the bottom than at the surface of the water in the road; the sand raised up and carried along by these currents, is deposited in such quantities on the ships anchors, that in the course of a single month it is impossible to raise them. In order to obviate this inconvenience, every ship is under the necessity of weighing her anchors every eight days.

It is unnecessary to add any thing farther respecting the road of Goayre, than that the ship-worm commits greater ravages here than at any other port on the coast.

CARAVALLEDA.

After leaving Goayre, I determined to proceed without stopping till I reached the next port on the coast worthy of notice, when my steps were arrested by a spot to the east, on which formerly stood the city Caravalleda.

The cause of its desertion is too honourable to its first inhabitants to be passed over in silence.

This city was founded on the 8th of September, 1568, by Diego Losado, to whom the city of Carraccas likewise owed its existence. It was built on the same spot where Francois Faxardo had erected the city of Collado, in 1560, which the Indians forced him to evacuate two years after. Losado gave to Caravalleda a constitution similar to that of all the other cities he founded. Each enjoyed the right of electing annually its *alcades* in order to fill the office of *regidors*. The city of Caravalleda exercised this right without interruption, until 1586; at which period, Louis de Roxas, then governor of the province, ordered the inhabitants, by his own private authority, not to name the *alcades* for the following year. Representations were made on the part of the inhabitants without effect, but this did not prevent them at the usual period from proceeding to their election. Those whom the governor had nominated, presented themselves, but were rejected. This undue stretch of power had so emboldened the citizens, that they were determined to brave every persecution in opposing it. The governor, on his part, violently irritated by their opposition, had the temerity to arrest and throw into prison four *regidors*, who had conscientiously fulfilled the duties of their station.

The inhabitants of Caravalleda regarding this injury as committed on themselves, took the laudable resolution of wholly abandoning a city where the laws had been so grossly outraged, and accordingly retired to Valence and Carraccas.

The king condemning the conduct of the governor, ordered such punishment to be inflicted upon him, as might deter his successor from following so pernicious an example. The regidors were set at liberty, and received every possible satisfaction; yet when invited to return, the inhabitants replied, that they would never re-enter a place which must unceasingly remind them of the injury they had received.

It was from the impossibility of repeopling Caravalleda, that the port of Goayre became the emporium of this part of the country.

To your memory, wise and upright citizens, who displayed such firmness in the hour of trial, without committing any of those excesses that must have disgraced your cause, this tribute of respect is paid by one of your most sincere admirers! Your dignified retreat from a city profaned by injustice, afforded a salutary check to usurped authority. May this memorable event be for ever engraven on the hearts of all men, in order that it may be imitated by every oppressed people, and afford a lesson of moderation to governors, and those in possession of supreme power.

PORT FRANCOIS.

Between Goayre and cape Codera, which are separated by a space of twenty-five leagues, seventeen rivers flow into the sea at equal distances. Upon the banks of these rivers there are many plantations of cocoa, and a few of sugar-canes. Four leagues from cape Codera we meet with Port-François, which is a tolerable harbour for small shipping. It is from this port that they send off the productions raised in the neighbourhood.

HIGUEROTE.

From cape Codera the coast extends towards the south-south-east. At the distance of three leagues is the small port of Higuerote, which is not more important than Port-François, since no trade whatever is carried on in it; the inhabitants embark here merely the articles raised in the immediate vicinity.

BAY OR LAKE TACARIGUA.

At three leagues distance from Higuerote, we meet with a branch of the Tuy, named Paparo, and three leagues farther on discover the mouth of the Tuy itself, which is only a league and a half from the lake of Tacarigua; this lake must not be confounded with that of Valence, to which the Indians give the same name. It is in the form of a bay, and the only reason that can be assigned for receiving this appellation, is, that frequently all communication is cut off between it and the sea by a shifting bar of sand.

This lake or bay is of a circular form, and nearly seven leagues in extent from the sea to the north-east to its south-west extremity. It abounds in almost every species of sea fish interiorly, and is of a considerable depth.

For the space of twenty-eight leagues along the coast, towards the east, there are a great many rivers, which flow like torrents in the rainy season, but become dry, or nearly so, during the rest of the year.

BARCELONA.

The next port is that of Barcelona, washed by the waters of the Neveri. On proceeding to the east of this river, we observe about four miles from its mouth, upon a little eminence, which bears the same name as the city, two small forts, intended to protect shipping at anchor in a shallow bay at a short distance. Vessels of a moderate size, from want of a sufficient depth of water, can alone enter this kind of port, which merely affords them a shelter from the wind; but a league farther to the north-

ward, in the southern part of the island of Borracha, which is inhabited by fishermen alone, is a harbour, where ships of the greatest burden may anchor in perfect safety.

From the morne of Barcelona the coast runs east-north-east to Cumana, which is situated from it at the distance of twelve leagues. This space is occupied by a chain of islets, at a little distance from the shore, but there are no bays or ports of much importance.

CUMANA

Is about one mile distant from the shore. The river Manzanares runs through it since the city has been extended on the western shore. But as this river has only a sufficient depth of water to admit shallops and other small craft, large vessels anchor on what the Spaniards call *Placer*, which signifies a bank of sand under water. This place, which affords safe anchorage to ships of every burden, lies west of the river, fronting a rivulet named *Bordones*, distant about a league from the mouth of the river, so that goods are obliged to be carried to and from the vessels in boats or canoes. This harbour possesses the advantage of being extremely well sheltered.

GULPH OF CARIACO.

This gulph lies at a short distance east from Cumana, and is formed by the Cumana coast, the promontory of Araya, and the Barrigon. Its extent from west to east is ten, and its breadth three, and in some points four leagues. Its depth in the middle of the gulph is from eighty to a hundred fathoms. Its waters are as tranquil as those of a lake, because it is completely sheltered by the surrounding mountains from all winds excepting the land breeze.

There are several good landing-places in this gulph, as Gurintar, Juanantar, &c.

POINT OF ARAYA.

The point of Araya, which stretches eastward from the opening of this lake, is extremely dangerous, not only because it is low, but on account of a sand-bank lying towards the north-east, which projects about two leagues into the sea almost on a level with the surface of the water. It is this point, however, we ought to observe, on arriving from Europe, in order to find readily the entrance to the port of Cumana. It is therefore necessary to steer from it north-west and south-east, until that we have doubled it. Then we may coast the shore at half a league distance.

THE CANAL OF MARGUERITE.

Many small bays and harbours are situated between the point of Araya and that of Chacopata. In this space, towards the north, lie the isles of Coche, Cubagua, and Marguerite, and very many shallows, which render navigation extremely dangerous; on which account it is necessary to procure a pilot from the port of Pampatar.

PORT OF CARIACO.

Leaving Chacopata on the west, the coast presents towards the east several ports, which serve no other purpose than to carry on a contraband traffic. That of Cariaco is the only one into which ships of any burden can enter; but the want of territorial productions and a scanty population, render it almost useless.

GULPH OF PARIA.

In pursuing our course towards the east, we arrive at this gulph, which the Spaniards term *Triste*, but which, in conformity with the French, I have named Paria.

The gulph of Paria has Terra-Firma on the west, and Trinidad on the east; from these, in a northerly direction, proceed two points, between which are three islands lying due east and west with these points, and bounding the gulph to the north, leaving however four openings, termed the Mouths of the Dragon, by which the superabundant water of the gulph finds an exit. The largest of these mouths is two leagues in breadth, and lies towards the west, between the point of Paria in Terra-Firma, and the island of Chacachacares: on the western side it is full of rocks; but as they are all visible, the navigator may easily avoid them. This, however, is not the case with a rock which lies level with the water at two cables length distant from the island. Between this last island and that of Navois, there is another mouth, much less considerable than the first. The third is formed by the isle of Navois on the west, and that of Monos on the east. The fourth is between this island and the island of Trinidad, on the west-south-west, and is termed the mouth of *los Monos*, or of the Monkey; probably because it is the narrowest and most difficult to enter, by reason of a rock in the middle of it, which by its position occasions an almost continued bellowing noise; while the high land of Trinidad, by preventing the entrance of the wind, operates to maintain a calm, which is seldom interrupted by squalls of any duration.

The gulph of Paria is about twenty-five leagues from east to west, and fifteen from north to south; it affords throughout ex-

cellent anchorage, at different depths from eight to thirty fathoms. In fact this gulph is a real harbour, which, for capaciousness and safety, may vie with any other in the world. Its bottom is every where composed of mud, excepting near the shore, where there are a few sand-banks.

Some authors have asserted that the water of this gulph is perfectly fresh; but I affirm, on the contrary, that it is equally brackish as that of the sea. A considerable body of water runs into it with great rapidity, from the south-south-west, by the different mouths of the Oroonoko. Various reasons render it probable, that the waters of the Oroonoko have in the progress of ages detached the island of Trinidad from the main land, and that their ravages only ceased after they had opened a passage for themselves by the mouths of the Dragon into the ocean.

As the current uniformly runs through the mouths of the Dragon towards the sea, it is utterly impossible for vessels to enter the gulph, particularly by the small mouths, unless the wind proves extremely favourable. The entrance on the south, is equally difficult as on the northern side. To enter it with complete safety, it is necessary that the wind blow towards the south-east; that we keep to the south of the island of Trinidad, as far as the point of Hicacos, steering at the distance of two cables' length from it, in order to pass between it, and a high sand-bank situated in the middle of the canal, that forms the islet of Soldado, with the point of Hicacos above-mentioned. When we are at two thirds of a league towards the north, we may approach within a single league west of the island of Trinidad, until we come to anchor in Port d'Espagne.

Along the coast of Paria there are numerous ports and roads, which greatly facilitate the communication between Trinidad and the main land. This circumstance is at present solely in favour of the English, who possess that island.

CHAP. II.

POPULATION OF CARRACCAS.-OBSTACLES OPPOSED TO THE EMIGRATION OF SPANIARDS, AS WELL AS FOREIGNERS TO SOUTH AMERICA.--ATTACHMENT OF THE CREOLES TO THEIR COUNTRY.—PUBLIC EDUCATION.--REFORMATION IN DRESS.—CUSTOM OF THE SIESTA.—MARRIAGES.—PARENTAL AUTHORITY.—FILIAL OBEDIENCE.—PARTICULAR MODES AND CUSTOMS.—LAW SUITS.—CAUTION OF THE SPANIARDS IN UNDERTAKING ANY ENTERPRISE.—CONSPIRACY AT VENEZUELA.--HONOURABLE CONDUCT OF CHARLES IV.—SLAVERY.—BARBAROUS CUSTOM OF EXPOSING NEW-BORN INFANTS.—NECESSITY OF AN HOSPITAL FOR THE RECEPTION OF FOUNDLINGS.

Population.

THE mos taccurate researches have not enabled me to procure an exact account of the population of the provinces dependent on the captain-generalship of Carraccas. The sum of all my information on this subject, is, that the province of Venezuela, including Darinus, contains a population

of - - - -	500,000
Maracaybo - - -	100,000
Cumana - - -	80,000
Spanish Guiana - -	34,000
The island of Marguerite -	14,000
Total -	728,000

The white inhabitants are considered as constituting two tenths of this population, the black three, the effranchised slaves, or their descendants, four, and the Indians the remainder.

This population, upon a soil whose fertility might be increased an hundred fold, is unquestionably extremely small. It may perhaps appear surprizing, that the number of Europeans who inhabit this country is so inconsiderable; but our surprise must cease, when we reflect on the scanty population by which it is supplied; upon the vast extent of the Spanish possessions, whose colonists are derived from the same source; on the natural predilection for mines, which attract to Mexico and Peru all the Spaniards whom ambition has induced to leave Europe; and, lastly, on the impediments which the Spanish government finds it necessary to throw in the way of Europeans wishing to emigrate to America, in order to prevent the depopulation of the mother country.

OBSTACLES TO THE EMIGRATION OF THE SPANIARDS TO SOUTH AMERICA.

No person is permitted to embark for Spanish America without an express order from the king, which is never granted unless on commercial business, and then only for a limited period. The liberty of settling permanently in that country is very difficult to obtain. Persons belonging to the sacerdotal and monastic classes are subjected to similar restrictions. Even the creoles who visit Spain are not permitted to return to their native country, without first obtaining permission from the court to that effect. This prohibition extends equally to females, who are under the necessity of obtaining a similar permission.

This system it is obvious is opposite to that of all other governments, which in general hold out every encouragement to free settlers in their colonies. Such settlements likewise afford a means of disposing of those members of the community who have committed crimes not punishable by death. The Spaniards, on the contrary, so far from transporting criminals of any kind to their foreign possessions, have not suffered any individual since 1584, to emigrate to the West Indies, unless they could produce unequivocal testimonies of good character. At no very distant period, it was even necessary before passing from one province of South America to another, first to obtain a new permission from the king; but this absurd regulation, although not formally abrogated, is now never insisted on.

The legislature has thought it incumbent on her, as an homage due to religion, to prohibit all those who have had the misfortune of being brought before the tribunal of the Inquisition, to emigrate to South America, in whatever manner they have been acquitted. But the obstacles thrown in the way of foreigners wishing to go out to Spanish America, are still greater. Till very lately it was necessary for every person desirous of obtaining passports, previously to produce documents of his Spanish descent; and unless this condition was complied with, every application to that effect was nugatory. At last, however, time, aided by the exigencies of the government, more than any real change of system, produced a regulation, whereby foreigners are permitted to visit the Spanish colonies on paying a tax imposed by the government.

EMIGRATION FROM SPAIN TO TERRA FIRMA.

We might perhaps be led to conclude from the number of Europeans scattered over the territory of Carraccas, that a considerable emigration takes place from Spain. A slight examination must, however, convince us that this is not the case. If

we except the individuals sent out by government to fill official situations, scarcely a hundred persons emigrate annually from Spain, with a view of settling in the Carraccas. It is true indeed, that very few of those who do go out ever return to Europe. Of a grave and sedentary habit, a Spaniard seldom thinks of changing his situation; and when once settled in America, rarely manifests the least wish of returning to his native country. The Biscayans and Catalonians are the only Spaniards in whom the *amor patriæ* is not easily extinguishable.

ATTACHMENT OF THE CREOLES TO THEIR COUNTRY.

From the ardour displayed by Europeans to emigrate to America, the creoles conceive that their own country is superior to every other on the surface of the globe: hence they seldom express the smallest desire to visit old Spain; or even appear to regard it in the light of their mother country. It cannot therefore appear astonishing, that the population of this country, which has never either suffered by emigrations, wars, or pestilence, should have gradually augmented during the space of nearly three centuries. It would still however have been greater, had it supplied the churches with fewer priests, and the convents with fewer monks and nuns.

PUCLIC EDUCATION.

Manners are so intimately connected with the system of education, that they may for the most part be regarded merely as the effect of the impressions received in schools. Hence it is, when we are acquainted with the mode of instruction adopted by a people, we may form a tolerably correct notion of their manners. This view of the subject has induced me to give a short sketch of the education bestowed upon the creoles, before entering into the consideration of their moral character.

On this subject I have availed myself of the labours of Don Miguel Joseph Sanz, a creole of Valence in the province of Venezuela. This learned civilian, who is superior to the illiberal prejudices of his countrymen, was employed by the government to draw up a code of municipal laws for the government of Carraccas, in which the enlarged views of the author, and the wisdom of the measures he recommends, appear to me fully to justify their choice.

"As soon," says this modern Lycurgus, in his Essay on Education, "as reason begins to dawn, the child is put to school, and set to read ridiculous tales, or devotional books, in which religion is reduced to certain external rites and observances, better calculated to render him a hypocrite, than a sincere and upright

citizen. Far from teaching him the moral obligations between man and man; or impressing upon his mind an exalted idea of the power, the justice, and the goodness of the Supreme Being, he is only instructed to repeat some prayers by heart, to count his beads, to carry a scapulary, and perform other external rites of christianity. Instead of teaching him his duty to God and his neighbour, he is left at full liberty to frequent the most improper company, and to pursue the most degrading and dangerous amusements. His mind is besides early inflated by the lessons of vanity and pride which he receives from his parents. There are few children in Carraccas who do not pride themselves on their descent, or foolishly boast of having an *alferez* for a grandfather, an alcaid for his uncle, a monk for a brother, or a priest for a relation.

"These faults, which naturally flow from their education, engender and nourish family feuds, and render the citizen haughty and deceitful. In place of inspiring the child with a just emulation of the virtues, or a proper detestation of the vices of his companions, he hears nothing from the mouths of his parents, but that Pierre is not so noble as Antoine; that the family of Jean has such or such a stain; and that when the family of François married, the family of Diego went into mourning. Such puerilities debase the mind, produce a powerful effect on public manners, create family divisions, render alliances difficult, generate distrust, and bursts asunder the bonds of charity, which is the foundation and cement of the social compact.

"The system of school education is in general extremely defective in Carraccas. The child is scarcely taght to pronounce the letters, to read without comprehending the import of the subject, and to write a wretched hand, until he is sent to the grammar school of Nebrija; without reflecting that, under such circumstances, nothing can be more ridiculous than to put him upon the study of the Latin tongue, or attempt to initiate him in a knowledge of the sciences taught at the univesity; because the youth must necessarily incur the greatest contempt, in such society, from his ignorance, though he may be decorated with the external insignia of a graduate. It is truly deplorable to see a student, who has attended several years the different schools of science, incapable of writing correctly, or explaining himself with precision in his mother tongue. Yet they will obstinately contend, that to render themselves familiar with their vernacular language, arithmetic, and the art of writing or speaking with ease and elegance, are vulgar accomplishments unworthy of attention.

"It is a general prejudice, that all science is comprehended in the Latin grammar of Nebrija, the philosophy of Aristotle, the

Institutes of Justinian, the *Curia Philippica,* and in the theology of Gonet or of Larraga; that it is sufficient to compose memoirs, to attend mass, to affix the badge of a graduate in the hat, or to wear the habit of a priest or a monk; that it would be derogatory to their dignity to engage in agricultural pursuits, or acquire a knowledge of the mechanical or useful arts. They wear the military uniform from mere ostentation; interlard their Spanish with barbarous French; become civilians in order to gain a livelihood; assume the sacred order to acquire respect and consideration; and pronounce vows of poverty in a monastery, with the express design of aggrandizing themselves.

"It is not uncommon to observe members of some distinguished families become military officers, who are wholly destitute of the knowledge necessary to perform the duties of their station; and there is scarce a white inhabitant, or even one of colour, who is not anxious to assume the character of a priest, a monk, or a civilian; even those who cannot attain such enviable distinctions, have the vanity to become at least notaries, writers, overseers of churches, or to enter as lay brothers, or pupils, into some religious community. Thus agriculture and the useful arts are despised; each individual longs to become a *gentleman,* and to riot in idleness, luxury, and dissipation of every kind. In this way law-suits multiply, the vicious are successful, the virtuous citizen is dispirited, and the whole body politic becomes corrupted.

"It is ignorance which gives stability to prejudices so inimical to the true interests of this people. If they were once taught, that the sacrifice most acceptable to the Deity, is to worship him in sincerity, and to promote the happiness of our fellow creatures, the sums which are daily lavished on useless rites and ceremonies, would be appropriated to the establishment of schools, and the manitenance of masters, capable of impressing on the mind of youth sound maxims of politics, morals, and genuine christianity. By this means would be trained up enlightened priests, upright magistrates, and virtuous citizens; who, so far from assuming the garb of religion to conceal their ignorance under the mask of hypocrisy, or employing their power in order to indulge their passions, or their riches with a view of oppressing the poor, would become the ornament of their country, and the promoters of public prosperity.

"Inthis country, we behold monasteries and religious societies of every description enriched with private donations, and priests and prebends enjoying immense revenues, to furnish which, every species of property is subjected to the most vexatious and enormous taxes, whilst no provision is made for those to whom the education of youth is entrusted. From this system of things

the clergy have so much multiplied, as to become a very grievous burden to the more active classes of the community".

This picture, sketched by the hand of an enlightened philanthropist, though intended to describe the state of education and morals in the city of Carraccas, is equally applicable to all the different provinces comprehended under that government.

Notwithstanding the defective mode of education pursued in these states, the creoles of Terra-Firma evince an active and ardent genius, and are more capable of application than those of the French colonies. They are certainly less polished and agreeable in their manners, because neither fencing, riding, music, nor drawing, or any other polite accomplishment, make a part of their education. But from the progress they make at school, by which they render themselves familiar with civil law, it is evident they are not defective in capacity, and only require, that their attention should be directed towards objects calculated to unfold their ideas, form their judgments, and enrich their minds. At present the education of the Spanish creoles partakes of the national prejudices, which regards all knowledge with contempt, that militates against their own pre-conceived theories and opinions. Some circumstances, however, appear to indicate, that the rising generation may be gradually led to adopt more enlarged views. In fact, many of the Spanish youths, aware of the insufficiancy of their education, endeavour to supply what is defective, and with this view, peruse with avidity the works of foreign authors. Several of them attempt, by the aid of dictionaries, to translate and speak the French and English languages, particularly the former. They do not think, like their fathers, that geography is a superfluous science, or that history is an useless study. Commerce begins to be less despised than formerly, and although the mania in favour of rank and distinction continues as great as ever, it is natural to suppose, that it must yield in its turn to the progress of reason.

The Spanish costume is daily giving place to the French fashions. The sword, which was formely a constant appendage to the dress of a Spaniard, is now only worn on days of ceremony. Round hats, cropt hair without powder, high pantaloons, and short waistcoats unbuttoned at the breast, form the dress of the Spanish youths, who, from their exalted rank or great riches, assume the privilege of leading the fashion. The greatest compliment you can pay a young man, is to say, he may be taken for a Frenchman; which, in his opinion, is to say, that he possesses taste, courage, and knowledge.

Not a single inhabitant in the Spanish dominions can dispense with a sleep of two, three, or four hours after his dinner, how-

ever frugal it may have been. The labouring classes of the community take care to arrange their time in such a manner as not to encroach on this indispensible indulgence, which appears rather to proceed from the nature of the climate, than from custom or example, since very few strangers fail to contract it in a very short time.

If a knowledge of the system of national education serves to throw some light upon the manners of a people, an acquaintance with their opinions respecting marriage, equally displays the state of public morals, whatever care self-love or prudence may take to disguise them.

Religion, public opinion, and national taste, all invite the Spaniard to marry early. Some privileges are besides annexed to this state: the slightest evidence is deemed sufficient to criminate a bachelor, whereas proofs of the strongest nature are scarcely admitted against a married man, unless his wife be the complainant. In the Spanish dominions females are reckoned marriageable at twelve, and males at fourteen; and nothing is more common in this country than to see a husband and wife, whose united ages do not exceed thirty. Congeniality of sentiment and disposition, is never considered in forming such connections; passion is mistaken for affection, and that important tie, which is to form the future happiness or misery of life, is entered into with as little reflection, as if it was only to remain binding for a single day. This precipitancy of entering into the marriage state, proceeds in a great measure from the Spanish laws, which in this respect give the parent too little authority over his child. It is true the Spanish law fixes the period of majority at twenty-five, and till that age the consent of parents is necessary to constitute a legal marriage; but this salutary regulation is frequently evaded and rendered nugatory: because a boy of fourteen and a girl of twelve years old, who long to be united in indissoluble bonds, demand, in the manner which the law prescribes, the consent of their parents. If the morals, education, or manners of either of the parties be deemed exceptionable, their parents have a right to refuse their consent. But this refusal, which in every other country would be sufficient to render any ulterior contract null and void, in Spain only opens a door to a vexatious and scandalous process between the child and his parents; and the law so far from aiding parental authority, forces them to furnish a marriage portion to their disobedient children, according to their circumstances, and to pay the expences of the process instituted to this effect. The only plea admitted in these courts, as sufficient to warrant a parent withholding his consent to the marriage of his child, is inferiority of birth. But if he fails to establish this point, neither the bad

conduct of the party, disparity of age, or inequality in point of fortune, will prevent the tribunal from ordering the immediate celebration of the marriage. In a country like Spain, where hereditary greatness is alone held in estimation, it is easy to perceive the ruinous consequences, and implacable hatred, which must necessarily flow from this unjust and impolitic law.

There is another, and a more simple mode, by which a child may elude parental restraint in any of the Spanish dominions, but which is nevertheless very seldom resorted to. It is sufficient to constitute a legal marriage, that the parties declare publicly in the presence of the cure of their parish, that they take each other for husband and wife. When this formality is complied with, neither the non-publication of banns, nor the opposition of parents, can prevent the celebration of the marriage. It is true the civil laws, in this respect, are in opposition to the canonical law, and proscribe such sort of contracts; but as they inflict no penalty upon the offending parties, and as parents can only seek redress by means of a tedious prosecution, they have little alternative but either to pardon, or finally throw off their offending offspring.

That domestic unhappiness so evident in this country is, we think, justly attributable to too early marriages. To the impetuosity and effervescence of passions, succeeds the calm of reflection; and a difference of character and disposition soon begins to manifest itself, which was never dreamt of by the young lovers, that frequently embitters every succeeding moment of their lives. They endeavour to support an appearance of cordiality, while their hearts are filled with mutual hatred; and fidelity becomes a farce, which they strive to get rid of as soon as possible. The children, who have continually under their eyes the infidelity of their father, and the intrigues of their mother from their most tender infancy, soon learn to despise every moral obligation; and thus vice becoming hereditary, is transmitted from generation to generation.

The blind protection afforded by the Spanish laws to females in opposition to their husbands, is another cause of unhappy marriages. No being can be more unfortunate than a Spanish husband, whose wife is jealous, dissolute, or peevish. If tormented by the first of these passions, she readily finds access to the civil and ecclesiastical authority, who in such cases evince a disposition implicitly to believe every thing, that a heated imagination can suggest against her husband. The most common complaints are, that the husband keeps a mistress, that he spends all his fortune in dissipation, while she and her family are allowed to want the common comforts of life, &c. No proof is required of these or similar assertions; she is believed

on her simple word. The husband, in such cases, according to the rank he holds in society, is either cited to appear, in order that he may receive a severe reprimand, or he is instantly, and without farther inquiry, thrown into prison, where he continues until his liberation is requested by his wife.

If a husband, on the contrary, complains of the bad conduct of his wife, she has only to bring forward an accusation which attacks his honour, and the poor husband is condemned to silence, and greater discretion; happy even if he is not subjected to the penalty, which ought to have been incurred by his wife.

A Spanish husband cannot undertake a journey without the consent of his wife, and without making a provision for her during his absence; if he does not return within the time limited in the permission he obtained, the judge, on the first application of the wife, orders his immediate return, were he even in Chili, or California, or whether his business be terminated or not: the wife has only to speak, the husband must obey. Military officers, and those employed in civil capacities, are forced to appropriate a portion of their pay, never less than two thirds, to the maintenance of their wives; and if this be not done voluntarily, the treasury has power to retain it on their behalf. Notwithstanding what has been said, it would be uncandid not to declare, that many Spanish families live in the greatest harmony, and afford an example of every domestic virtue to their children.

There is an habitual air of frankness and candour in the most trifling actions of this people, which, judging from appearances, would lead us to believe that in no country was filial obedience more respected. Every evening and morning, the Spanish children of every rank and condition, solicit and receive on their knees the parental benediction; and the same ceremony is repeated during the day, on the return of any part of the family after an occasional absence. The mode of address used by children towards their parents, is also marked with the greatest humility. They employ *su merced*, which is never used but by a slave to his master, or a free man to a white person of high rank. But such external homage proceeds less from sentiment than from fashion and habit, and may be justly ranked among those absurd ceremonies so numerous among the Spaniards.

Many ceremonies and customs, which for more than a century past have been ridiculed in most other countries, are still held by the Spaniards in the greatest veneration. Those who dare to violate them are regarded as vulgar and ill-educated, *poor hombre trato*.

The Spaniards, and indeed all those who speak the Spanish language, employ the third person of the verb in place of the

second. The *you* is never used but in the second person plural, and in sermons and public discourses. In conversation they speak of your favour, *vuestra merced*, which they pronounce syncope *usted*.

The *prebendaries*, heads of colleges, members of the audience, the fiscal auditor, and the military officers, from the colonel to the field-marshal, are addressed both in conversation and writing by the title of your Excellency, *vuestra sennoria*, which they pronounce *ousia*; the bishop has the title of *su sennoria ilustrisima*.

The term *sennor* is indiscriminately applied, except in their public acts, wherein it is restricted to those who have a ligitimate right to this title. The *don* corresponds to the *de* formerly used in France; with this difference, that the Spaniards do not prostitute it so much as it was done by that nation at no very distant period: at present it is given to every white who is not a mendicant.

Either a stranger, or a native who has been long absent, expects to be first visited, except by his superiors; who even frequently condescend to pay him such a compliment. This ceremony may either be performed personally, by letter, or by a simple message. A neglect of this attention often creates a coldness between the parties, which can only be effaced by a public apology.

The laws of civility are supposed to be violated by an individual leaving his residence without intimating his departure to his friends and neighbours, by a circular letter, which is answered by a personal visit, unless the families have been not only strangers but enemies.

Visits are also paid by their friends and acquaintances to every new married couple, and the same ceremony on the birth of each child, or after the recovery of any of the members of a family from a fit of sickness.

All the Spaniards receive their friends on the anniversary of their patron saint; and a neglect to comply with this custom would be considered as a heinous offence against the laws of good breeding. On entering a house, a Spaniard generally makes a noise in order to warn the family of his approach, and waits for permission to enter. If any one was perceived silently to enter the dwelling of another, it would be supposed he either meant to surprise them when off their guard, or to listen unperceived to their discourse.

The Spanish ladies always receive company seated on a sofa; and this custom is never deviated from whatever may be the rank, age, sex or intimacy of the visitor. When they intend going abroad, they send in the morning a *recado*, or message, intimating this intention; and these visits are always paid between

five and eight o'clock in the evening. Husbands very seldom accompany their wives on such occasions; they go without any retinue, merely followed by two or three servants, in a black petticoat and a white veil.

If you praise the sword, the cane, the watch, or even the house, wife, or children of a Spaniard, he replies with the most ridiculous grimace, "they are at your disposal!"

The dress on days of ceremony, is a coat and breeches of taffety satin, or velvet; the Spaniards never wear cloth except they be in mourning, or when it is richly embroidered. The waistcoat is either of gold or silver stuff, or at least covered with embroidery; they wear a cocked hat: but their dress after all would be deemed incomplete without the accompaniment of a gold or silver-hilted sword.

Several acts of the government are regulated by the same ridiculous attention to etiquette, or to speak more correctly, are purely ceremonial. The most prominent of these are, the anniversary of the patron saint of the king, queen, and of the prince of Asturias; they term such ceremonies *dias de besamenos*, days of kissing hands. Like all the other Spanish festivals, they are strictly religious. The military officers repair to the house of the governor and captain-general, from whence they proceed to church, preceded by the captain-general, as president of the audience, with the regent and oidors. After assisting at a solemn *Te Deum*, during which a batallion of troops of the line fire three discharges, the procession returns in the same order to the government-house, where all the civil and religious functionaries attend to pay their compliments to the captain-general, as representative of the king. Some difficulty having arisen respecting the propriety of the bishop submitting to this ceremony, it was referred to the king, who determined it in the affirmative; but in order to soften the mortification of this determination, it was at the same time ordered, that the moment the prelate had fulfilled this duty, the captain-general and suite should proceed in their turn to wait on him as head of the church.

The extreme respect paid by the Spaniards to so many idle and unmeaning ceremonies render them extremely vindictive and irritable, while apparently they possess the greatest equanimity and calmness of temper. An indiscreet expression, or equivocal word respecting the family antiquity, or the nature of his titles, throws the Spaniard into the greatest rage, and fills his mind with an ardent thirst of vengeance. He will more easily pardon a jest upon himself than on his ancestors. Duelling, which is condemned by reason, and proscribed by the laws of every well-regulated state, is nevertheless sanctioned every where by public opinion and the laws of honour, except in the Spanish empire;

where a duel is never deemed sufficient to wash away an affront, nor even lead to frank and sincere reconciliation. When a Spaniard conceives hatred against any one, it only ends with his life, and is not unfrequently handed down for several succeeding generations, according to the nature of the offence. But their vengeance never occasions the effusion of blood; it produces law-suits, perverts justice, and ruins the character and circumstances of the party with whom they are at variance. Few Spanish families of any distinction, but are involved in several processes, which proceed solely from wounded pride or self-love.

The Spanish Americans are more frequently engaged in processes before the different tribunals, for some contested point respecting prerogative, than on account of mercantile and pecuniary concerns. They are passionately attached *to fight with the pen*, and this disposition, which frequently terminates in the ruin of both parties, administers to the subsistence and rapacity of a set of lawyers, whose reputation augments in proportion to their talents at fomenting discord.

Speaking with that frankness and impartiality which preside over my thoughts, and guide my pen, I am free to say, that in no other country in the world are there so many processes as in Spanish America; and particularly in the island of Cuba. Is it possible to believe that in the city of the Havannah alone, there were in 1792, sixty-two lawyers, independent of those who were scattered through the other cities and villages of the island, amounting to thirty-four, making with the sixty-two in the capital, a total of one hundred and six? The attornies and notaries abound in the same proportion. The population of the island at this period amounted only to two hundred and fifty-four thousand eight hundred and twenty-one persons, including slaves; and the territorial exports did not reach five millions of piastres.

Some of the most respectable and most enlightened inhabitants, estimate the sums annually expended in carrying on prosecutions before the court of audience in Carraccas, at one million five hundred thousand piastres; and I have conversed with none who reduce it below one million two hundred thousand. If the number of such prosecutions, and the expence attending a decision, could be reduced to one third, how greatly would commerce, agriculture, and public morals, profit by such a reformation.

The Spanish creoles, or Europeans established in America, are not apparently of a character to delight in litigation. Instead of being petulant, active, or enterprising, they are gentle, honest, affable, and polite to excess. They do not indicate much boldness of character, and still less audacity. All their undertakings partake of a certain degree of timidity, which they call prudence. They never enter on extensive speculations; hence if they do not

accumulate rapid and overgrown fortunes, they are seldom completely ruined.

Notwithstanding that the extreme caution and solemnity of the Spanish character appears extremely favourable to the stability of the government, and affords to the mother country an almost certain pledge that her sovereignty in South America, will be of long duration; yet in 1797 a very dangerous revolution had been nearly effected in the province of Venezuela. It is true that many circumstances, which cannot again happen, concurred to give to this conspiracy a serious character.

The example of the French revolution, acting on the imagination of a few sanguine minds, induced them to attempt a similar change in the government of Terra Firma; and the political state of Europe at that period appeared extremely favourable to the execution of their design. Spain, exhausted by her struggle with France, and still more so by a new war with England, did not appear to be in a situation to afford much opposition to such a project. Besides, could she even have spared a sufficient number of troops for this purpose, what probability was there of landing them in safety on the shores of South America, while the ocean continued covered with the fleets of the English? and would not that nation, from a barbarous, but too frequent policy, do every thing in her power to assist and forward the designs of the insurgents?

Another and more immediate cause concurred to inspire the factious with the hope of effecting a successful revolution in the Carraccas. Discontents had been for several months gaining ground among the inhabitants, occasioned by a measure of police that was extremely oppressive in its operation. Already had the government been assailed by the clamours of the discontented, which might have proved of serious consequence, but for the decisive conduct of the Captain-General Carbonnell, who, in opposition to the Audience, did every thing in his power to redress the grievances of the inhabitants, being convinced of the justness of their complaints. This chief, by the firmness and moderation of his measures, had the satisfaction of beholding order restored, and of quieting the general alarm, though it is probable much dissatisfaction still remained.

Such was the state of the public mind, when three state prisoners were sent from Old Spain, who had been condemned on account of revolutionary practices, to be confined for life in the fortress of Goayre. They declared themselves to be the martyrs of liberty, and victims of despotism. Gifted with the power of persuasion, they interested the guards in their favour, and received every indulgence it was in the power of the officers or soldiers to bestow. They were permitted to walk within the

fortress for the benefit of the air, and suffered freely to converse with any one who approached them. Profiting by this indulgence, they formed the project of realizing their revolutionary maxims in the province of Venezuela; and cautiously unfolded their intentions to a few individuals whose principles accorded with their own. After some time spent in sounding the dispositions, and in endeavouring to make converts among men of all ranks and conditions, they began to perceive the impossibility of setting in motion the cold and apathic inhabitants of Venezuela, and therefore turned their attention to the best means of securing their own freedom. Under the pretence of collecting their adherents scattered through the provinces, and of proceeding to the English islands, in order to secure their co-operation in their measures, they not only obtained their liberty, but were furnished with the means of secretly leaving the country: it is scarcely necessary for me to add, that they have never reappeared.

On the 13th July, 1797, the secret so carefully guarded for several months, was discovered, and the whole transaction made known to the government.

As the focus of the conspiracy existed at Goayre, an order was immediately sent thither to imprison all those concerned in it; and a similar precaution was taken at Carraccas. These measures produced the desired effect. The principal conspirators fled: the one, an officer of the line, retired from service; and the other, corregidor of the village of Macuto, near Goayre. Others of them took advantage of the pardon held out by the Audience, and named their accomplices, in proof of their repentance. I add, with regret, that in this respect the promises of the government were not altogether fulfilled.

I proceed to record with satisfaction a trait of clemency which does honour to the reign of Charles IV. Scarcely had that monarch been apprized of the event in question, than he transmitted a secret order to the Audience of Carraccas, enjoining them to spare the effusion of human blood, and to enter into a compromise with men who appeared rather to have been seduced through ignorance, than to have acted from any preconcerted design. This order threw the Audience into a state of great perplexity, and forced them to abandon a system of rigour they had commenced. They spared several victims; it was the intention of the King that all should have been spared. The opinion that a general amnesty had been granted, induced one of the chiefs to leave the asylum he had found in the English colonies, and return at the expiration of two years, to his family at Goayre. But no sooner was the return of the corregidor of Macuto made known to the new captain-general Don Manuel de Guevara Vasconzelos,

than he caused him to be arrested, and thrown into the prison of Carraccas. He was executed on the eighth of May, 1799. Seventy-two individuals were implicated in this conspiracy; seven of whom were ordered to be executed; thirty-three were condemned to the gallies, or to temporary imprisonment from two to eight years; and the remaining thirty-two were sent to Spain to be disposed of by the king, who pardoned them in 1802, on condition of their not returning to Venezuela, promising at the same time that they should be employed in Spain in the same rank and station in which they had served in America. Twenty-five of those engaged in this plot were Europeans, and forty-nine creoles.

After the conquest of America, the court of Spain hesitated between the alternative of establishing slavery in their new possessions, or relinquishing the great benefits which would arise from the cultivation of the fertile soil of the new world; when Barthelemy de las Casas, a priest, and afterwards bishop of Chiapa, presented himself in 1517 before Charles V. in order to plead the cause of the natives. From the general principle of the natural liberty of man, he drew the strange conclusion, that the slavery of the Indians was a crime, whilst that of the Africans was dictated by necessity. He entreated with all the enthusiasm of philanthropy, for the liberty of the former, while with the most cold-blooded tyranny he pleaded for the necessity of enslaving the latter. From his representations the government was induced to purchase four thousand of those unfortunate beings, whom they landed on the islands of Saint Domingo, Cuba, Jamaica, and Porto-Rico. Thus negro slavery was first established in America; and every European state that has successively obtained possessions in that quarter of the globe, has been led to the adoption of the same cruel policy.

The Spaniards could not conceal from themselves, that to traffic in human beings was repugnant to every principle of their religion; but by a subtile compromise with their consciences, they persuaded themselves there could be no crime in purchasing the Africans when brought upon their shores. The government, therefore, in conformity to this idea, have at different periods entered into a treaty with foreign merchants, to introduce a certain number of blacks into different districts of their South American possessions. The planters were besides permitted to purchase an additional number of slaves from any of the neighbouring colonies, until the revolution in Saint Domingo rendered such a practice extremely dangerous; since it was not improbable, ideas of insubordination might be imported by means of such negroes.

The number of slaves employed in the captain-generalship of

Carraccas, in cultivating the land, and as domestics, amounts to two hundred and eighty thousand four hundred. It is generally believed that they are treated with greater humanity in the Spanish possessions than in those of any other power; but although this may be true in some respects, it is not so universally. Each country adopts a particular system for the government of their slaves, which necessarily partakes of the manners and character of the nation whence it emanates.

The English treat them with a harshness, which affords a singular contrast with the principles of humanity they affect on all other occasions. The French, without holding much intercourse with their slaves, only require that they shall work a certain number of hours, but never demand any account of their actions during the intervals appropriated to relaxation or repose. They are only punished for flight, drunkenness, and laziness. Extensive hospitals, and the best medical attendance are provided for the sick; and labour is duly apportioned to the strength of each individual. They are furnished with proper clothing and habitations suitable to the climate; and the tribunals are vigilant in restraining any abuse of authority on the part of the master.

The Spaniards are much more familiar with their negroes than either the English or French, but there is a mixture of self-love mingled with this condescension. They wish them to learn more prayers, and to be better versed in the catechism, than is commonly the case with other christians. The master becomes the inquisitor of his slaves, he forces them to comply with all the rites enjoined by the established religion of his country, and guards them as much as possible from all licentious intercourse with their fellow slaves. In the country, as well as in the city, they lock up every night the young female negroes, from the age of sixteen until they are married. They watch their steps, and lose sight of them as seldom as possible. But this vigilance does not answer the purposed end, since as great, if not greater, licentiousness prevails among the Spanish slaves, than among those belonging to any other state.

The Spanish negroes receive from their master only a supply of prayers, since they are very scantily provided with food and clothes; and the law is silent on this subject. The consequence of which is, that except from a few proprietors, whose hearts are not altogether steeled against the feelings of humanity, they receive no other provisions than what they cultivate on spots of ground allotted to them for that purpose, whether the harvest be productive or not, and they are suffered to go about literally covered with rags.

The domestic negroes are little better attended to in these respects than the field negroes; the allowance they receive for the

whole day is scarcely sufficient to furnish a comfortable breakfast; intrigue, rapine, and libertinism supply the rest. They receive no clothes but those which are termed *de livrée,* because they are only worn when they go abroad in the train of their master: at other times they remain naked, or covered with rags undeserving the name of garments. In sickness they are wholly abandoned to nature; no proper habitations are provided for their reception, nor have they any medical assistance whatever.

A royal edict was sent out, dated 31st May, 1789, which had for its object the amelioration of the condition of the slaves in respect to abuses above-mentioned, as well as several others; but this edict has not hitherto been carried into execution.

In all our modern colonies, cultivated by slaves, no provision is made for their enfranchisement; it always proceeds from the generosity of the master, or is more frequently the wages of prostitution. But the greatest number of governments, far from favouring such acts, render them extremely difficult to be performed, from the forms necessary to be gone through, and the taxes imposed on such transactions. In fact, in a population of seven hundred and twenty-eight thousand persons, who constitute the captain-generalship of Carraccas, it is estimated that there are two hundred and eighty-one thousand two hundred enfranchised slaves, or individuals born of parents who had received their freedom, and who are known under the generic appellation of *men of colour.*

The first regulations respecting men of colour placed them on an equal footing with the whites; but by an edict of the king, dated 7th of June, 1621, and two succeeding ones, their privileges were considerably curtailed. They were declared incapable of holding any public employment, or serving in the army. They were also subject to a capitation tax; and the dress of the females was regulated by sumptuary laws, which prohibited them from wearing gold, jewels, and certain other ornaments; but this law has not, for the last few years, been strictly executed.

In very few instances the king has been induced to grant his special protection to some families of colour, who thereby attained all the rights of the other Spanish inhabitants. A case of this kind occurred during my stay at Carraccas; on which occasion the females of the family, released from all restraint, displayed an ostentation and luxury, which rendered them truly contemptible in the eyes of common sense.

Alliances between whites and people of colour, though not prohibited by law, is nevertheless more rare in the Spanish possessions than elsewhere; and the first families are extremely careful not to admit such a mixture into their blood.

in the Spanish possessions; and while we behold, in the city, and provinces of Carraccas, churches richly endowed, and every species of religious societies overgrown with wealth, not a single hospital has been erected for the reception and education of those deserted beings.

CHAP. III.

GOVERNMENTS AND POPULATION OF AMERICA BEFORE ITS CONQUEST BY THE EUROPEANS.—PHYSICAL AND MORAL CONSTITUTION OF THE INDIANS--PROPENSITY TO WAR.—RELIGION.—WORSHIP PAID TO THE TOAD, AND TO VARIOUS IDOLS.—OPINIONS RESPECTING THE SOUL AFTER DEATH.—FUNERALS OF THE INDIANS.—LAZY AND SLUGGISH LIFE LED BY THE INDIANS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE OTOMAQUES.--TORTOISE FISHERY. MARRIAGES.--MISERABLE CONDITION OF THE OROONO-KO FEMALES.—POLYGAMY.—DIVORCE.—ADULTERY.—EXCHANGE OF WIVES.—EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.--HATRED OF SONS AGAINST THEIR PARENTS.—DRESS.—THE GUARAUNOS AND GUAJIROS, INDIANS NOT YET CONQUERED.—THEIR CONNECTION WITH RIO-DE-LA-HACHE AND WITH THE ENGLISH.--INTEREST WHICH THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT HAS IN OVERCOMING THOSE TRIBES ---CIVILIZED INDIANS.--EXTREME MILDNESS OF THE LAWS IN THEIR FAVOUR.—PRIVILEGES GRANTED TO THEM.—LOADED WITH FAVOURS BY THE CHURCH.—MELANCHOLY RESULTS.—DIFFICULTY OF CONVERTING THEM INTO CITIZENS, AND THE STILL GREATER DIFFICULTY OF MAKING THEM CHRISTIANS.--PROPER TREATMENT OF THE INDIANS.--NEW REGULATIONS FOR THIS PURPOSE.---RESULT OF THESE REGULATIONS.

WITHOUT entering into the question, how or whence America was first peopled, I shall confine myself to a description of the state of Terra-Firma, on the arrival of the Europeans, compared with what is at the present day.

POPULATION.

In general America was very thinly peopled; the state in which agriculture and the arts were found by the Europeans, afford a confirmation of this fact. The inhabitants subsisted

merely by hunting and fishing, and had not even attained to a knowledge of pastoral life. Mexico and Peru were the only countries where the principles of civilization had begun to unfold themselves. Monarchs who possessed unlimited power over their subjects, were in these states at the head of governments, which seemed to have originated from the necessity of union, in order to repel numerous and warlike hordes. Bogota, the present Santa-Fe, formed the third American government; but which was more recent than the two former, and much more imperfect. All the rest of America was occupied by particular tribes of Indians, although often the number of members did not amount to a thousand, and seldom exceeded six thousand. Such was the state of the New World when the Europeans imported into it their virtues and vices, their talents and ferocity, their knowledge and their prejudices.

All the coast, from cape Vela to the river Esequebo and the river Oroonoko, was thinly peopled with Indians. The plains were nearly uninhabited; because nature had been there less bountiful than elsewhere, and because as these plains are covered with rain-water during the greatest part of the year, they presented to the Indians no advantages to compensate for this inconvenience.

Each tribe possessed a circumscribed territory, and obeyed, in case of war, a chief called *cacique*, *quebi*, or *guajiros*, according to the idiom of the nation. So tenacious was each cacique of the limits of his possession, that the smallest encroachment gave occasion to the most bloody and sanguinary wars. Nothing can better prove the little intercourse between these tribes or nations, than the great diversity of their languages, and the multiplicity of dialects spoken by them.

All the Spanish authors who have written concerning the Indians, as well as those missionaries who have been engaged in their conversion, have discovered in their language analogous to the scantiness of their ideas.

M. Condamine, whose judgment must always carry weight, has made the same remark; and notwithstanding my wish to find them mistaken, I have been at last compelled to acquiesce in the justness of their observations. It is indeed natural to suppose, that a silent people, without external relations, destitute of any religious system, unacquainted with the refinements and delicacy of love, unambitious of riches, and wholly ignorant of agriculture and commerce; it is natural, I repeat, that such a people should possess only a very limited vocabulary, and that we should uselessly endeavour to find in their language words

The exposing illegitimate children is a very frequent practice

expressive of abstract ideas, as *existence*, *fatality*, *mind*, *conception*, &c. &c. I have heard the language of the Incas, which is still spoken in Santa-Fé, highly extolled for its richness; in proof of which, it is maintained that it is much better calculated to express the passion of love, than the Spanish tongue. But admitting this assertion to be a fact, the copiousness of the language of the Incas, does not flow from it as a legitimate consequence. The dialect of the creoles, which is spoken in the French colonies, is preferred in the intercourse of love to the French language: but surely we cannot hence affirm that it is more rich or abundant; on the contrary, I should suppose that it is owing to its simplicity, and the infantile modulations of which it is susceptible, that it finds its way to the heart, and lays it open to seduction under the veil of innocence.

Very few physical or moral distinctions of character are discoverable among the different Indian tribes. The structure of body common to the whole of them, is a straight forehead, eyes of a middle size, long and soft black hair, pointed nose, a wide mouth, large visage, and the head very big; they are in general of a copper colour, which varies according to the temperature of the province they inhabit; their ordinary height is from four and a half to five feet, but a few tribes are from five and a half to six feet. They have little or no beard, and few hairs on those parts of the body usually covered with them; but it is not true, as some writers have affirmed, that they are wholly *beardless*. Their members are large and muscular, which would seem to indicate that they are extremely robust: this appearance is, however, deceitful, as they are wholly incapable of any labour which requires much strength or exertion.

Laziness, taciturnity, a paucity of ideas, and a strong propensity to falsehood and deceit, may be ranked among the characteristic traits of the South American Indians. It has been justly observed, that those who lived in the interior of the country, are less cruel than the inhabitants of the coast. Among the latter were found many anthropophagi, but not one among the former.

There appeared to be among these tribes no other mode of terminating any differences that might arise, but by an appeal to arms. Vindictive and ferocious, their contests were carried on with a rage more resembling the fury of a wild animal, than the valour of an honourable warrior. Deceit and treachery were ranked by them among the first of military virtues. Poisoned arrows were in general use; they murdered the prisoners taken in battle, and not unfrequently afterwards devoured them. From the poverty of the different tribes, the love of plunder never animated them to the attack; their object in going to war was to devastate

rather than conquer, to destroy rather than possess. But notwithstanding their thirst for blood, two Indian armies were never observed to meet on the open plains. In Terra-Firma, the Caribs, who inhabited the banks of the Oroonoko, alone openly attacked their enemies; hence they enjoyed a reputation, which made them the terror of all the surrounding tribes. They owed to their courage the peaceable possession of a vast track of country, on which no other nation durst attempt an establishment.

All the Indian tribes believe in the immortality of the soul of man, as well as of brute animals; but this is the only point in which they appear to be agreed, since their ideas respecting the destination of the soul after death, varies according to the opinions held by the chiefs or pontifs of each nation.

It is somewhat remarkable, that the Indians of Terra-Firma admit only of an *evil spirit;* while all other barbarous nations with which we are yet acquainted, believe in a *good and an evil principle.* This singularity is attributable to the extreme cowardice of their characters. In the countries which now compose the provinces of Venezuela, Maracaybo, and Cumana, religion was united to the healing art. The same individuals exercised the functions of priest and physician, but their education was chiefly directed with a reference to this last profession. They were known under the name of *Piaches.* After having been taught the elements of medicine and magic, which were regarded as inseparable, they submitted to a seclusion of two years in caverns, situated in the deepest recesses of the forests. During this period they eat no animal food; they saw no person, not even their parents. The old *Piaches* or doctors, went and instructed them during the night. When they were supposed to have acquired sufficient knowledge, they obtained the title of *Piaches,* in virtue of which they acquired the right to cure diseases, to invoke evil spirits, and to predict future events.

The practice of these professors of the healing art, consisted in licking and sucking the affected part, in order, according to them, to eliminate the peccant humour. When the fever or pain increased, suction of the joints, as well as friction over all the body with the hand, was employed. During the performance of this operation, some unintelligible words were pronounced, with a loud voice, commanding the evil spirits to depart out of the patient's body. If the malady did not readily yield, the *Piache* or physician had recourse to a particular kind of wood, known to himself alone, with which he rubbed the breast, throat, and mouth of the patient; a practice which seldom failed to produce sickness and vomiting. In the mean time, the *Piache* on his side uttered dreadful exclamations, howled, shook, and made a thousand contortions with his body. If the sick person recovered,

every thing contained in the house was given to the *Piache;* if he died, the fault was imputed to destiny, never to the physician.

The *Piaches* were supposed to be gifted with the power of prophecy. They foretold whether there would be war or peace; whether the crops would prove scanty or abundant; and, in short, if Lopez de Gomara may be credited, no people were more grossly ignorant. From what has been said, we may readily suppose, that the *Piaches* were every where much respected, and feared by the inhabitants. Their influence over the minds of the people was absolute, but they very seldom exerted it.

According to the creed of all the civilized Indians, and even of some of the Spaniards themselves, diseases proceeded from witchcraft. They even sometimes accused the *Piaches* of this practice; but they never reproached them on that account, because, according to them, they only could counteract or destroy it.

It was an universal opinion among all the Indians of Terra-Firma ,that the soul, when emancipated from the body, could not exist without food. They mourned much at the funerals of their friends, and chanted the exploits of the deceased. They sometimes interred their dead, but more frequently converted the body into a kind of mummy by means of heat, and afterwards hung it up in their habitations. When they adopted the former mode, they uniformly buried provisions along with it. If the deceased belonged to a superior class, his friends regularly assembled, and celebrated his anniversary. These ceremonies, or rather orgies, were performed during the night. They disinterred the body, if it had been buried; and spent the whole night in dancing, drinking, and howling.

Such was the stupid character of the Indians of Terra-Firma, that it never entered into their minds to enquire into the cause of the wonderful harmony of nature. Insensible to her benefits, they never offered her any homage; she never excited in their minds either admiration or gratitude. They resembled man in nothing but the mere figure; their organization indicated the most wretched degradation.

The Indians of the Oroonoko, who were not much less ignorant or stupid, believed, however, in an author of all things, to whom they addressed their prayers and adoration. Some tribes, father Cæulin tells us, considered the sun as the supreme being and the first cause; it was to him that they attributed the productions of the earth, scanty or copious rains, and all other temporal blessings: others, on the contrary, believed that every thing depended on the influence of the moon, and conceived, when she suffered an eclipse, that she was angry with them. When such a phenomenon occurred, these Indians practised the most ridicu-

lous ceremonies, in order to prevent the chastisements with which they believed themselves to be threatened on account of their indolence and ingratitude. They played on warlike instruments, or took arms in their hands to evince their valour, felled wood, or undertook other laborious exercises, to prove that they could not be charged with effeminacy, and punished without injustice. The women left their huts, threw maize and other grains into the air, sending forth, at the same time, the most dolorous cries, promising to amend what was amiss in their conduct, and to be more laborious for the future. No sooner, however, was the eclipse over, than they congratulated each other on having averted the moon's wrath by specious promises; they afterwards gave themselves up to dancing, which terminated, like all their other festivals, in drinking, and other acts of brutality. The Indians who have not yet been subjugated, still preserve all these customs; and even several of the civilized tribes still retain a few of them.

Some other tribes of Indians, who likewise dwelt upon the banks of the river Oroonoko, paid to toads the honours due to the divinity. Far from injuring these animals, they carefully kept them under pots, in order to obtain rain or fine weather; and so fully persuaded were they of their power in this respect, that they scourged them as often as their petitions were not answered.

The only religious rite performed by some other of these tribes, was that of dancing, to the sound of very noisy instruments, before two small idols, to which they paid reverence by chanting extemporaneous couplets.

All the Indians appear to agree, as we have already observed, respecting the immortality of the soul, but they do not concur as to what becomes of it after death. Some are of opinion that the soul takes up its abode in the same fields which the individual, to whom it belonged, cultivated during life. Others suppose that it retires to certain lakes, and is swallowed by monstrous serpents, which transport it to a paradise, where its time is occupied in constant dancing and drinking.

When an Indian slays a wild beast, he opens its mouth, and pours down its throat some intoxicating liquor, in order that its soul may inform others of a similar species of the kind reception it received, and that they may be encouraged to come and share the same favour.

Drinking and indolence constitute the supreme felicity of the Indians. The most inebriating liquors are considered as preferable to all others. Their women formerly prepared a species of vinous liquor from fruits, such as aranas, &c. which possessed very intoxicating qualities; it was called *chiche*: but since the introduction of tafia and other similar liquors, it is seldom prepared. The Indians spend all their time in drinking and sleep-

ing: they never leave their hammocks unless when imperious necessity forces them to go a hunting or fishing; on which occasions they take their measures so well, that by a single day's exertion, they generally secure subsistence and repose for a whole week.

The Otomaques, who occupy the upper parts of the Oroonoko, constitute an exception to this rule; possessing greater intelligence and activity than the other Indians, they spent almost their whole time, before the entrance of the missionaries among them, in constant action and sport, except those moments which were dedicated to sleep and lamentations over the dead.

On the rising of the sun, all of them who were capable of labour, repaired to their respective chiefs, who assigned to each his task for the day. In seed-time and harvest, a certain number of individuals also applied themselves to the labours of the field, the products of which were lodged in public granaries, and shared out by the chiefs

Next to the Otomaques, the Guaraunos, who inhabit the islands at the mouth of the Oroonoko, are supplied most abundantly with food. They seldom feel the effects of scarcity, as from their situation they can generally take as much fish as is necessary to satisfy their wants. They cultivate besides a species of palm termed *murichi*, which supplies them with bread, and from which they make a kind of wine; but in general the subsistence of the Indians is both precarious and scanty. They are not always successful in their hunting and fishing excursions; neither can they at all seasons procure vegetables in a sufficient quantity; when in addition to these circumstances we consider the improvident character of the Indians, it must be obvious that they would be frequently under the necessity of prolonging their sleep, in consequence of having nothing to satisfy their hunger, if they did not find a resource in the turtle with which their shores abound.

Annually, on the decrease of the waters of the Oroonoko, which occurs during February, incredible numbers of turtle repair to the banks of that river to deposit their eggs in the sand, and remain till they are sufficiently grown to procure subsistence for themselves. At this period, all the Indian tribes, who live near the borders of the Oroonoko, resort with their families to the shores of that river, to lay in a supply of turtle, which, after drying by means of heat, they store up for future use. They also preserve the eggs, except those from which they extract an oil, that is no ways inferior to the best olive oil.

With these articles, independent of home consumption, they carry on a considerable traffic with the Indians living at a distance from the Oroonoko.

Marriage is established among all the Indian tribes throughout America. This institution, coeval perhaps with the world itself, is not considered by them as a religious rite; on the contrary, its sanctity is profaned by the universal practice of polygamy. But though there be no code prohibiting alliances between near relations, incestuous unions are never sanctioned by the form of marriage.

Fathers possess no controul over the inclinations of their male children; but they exercise the most unlimited sway over those of the females of their family. They must implicitly submit to give their hand to the man, or rather to the tyrant, of their parent's choice. Instead of giving a portion with his daughter, the father receives one from his new son-in-law, who pays it under the form of labour, in game, fish, or other articles. Dancing and drunkenness constitute the whole ceremony of marriage.

The relations on both sides are invited on such occasions; the men bring along with them materials proper to build a hut for the young pair, and the females present them with fish, fruit, bread, and drink; the former chant couplets to the bridegroom, and the latter to the bride. As soon as it becomes dark, the young wife is presented to her husband, which concludes the ceremony. In order to render a female worthy of the hand of a chief, it is necessary she should be descended from a family distinguished by military exploits, or should have had one ancestor, at least, a great warrior.

The same ceremonies prevail among all the tribes inhabiting the banks of the Oroonoko; they merely differ with respect to the kind of couplets chaunted by the old women to the bride. "*Ah my daughter,*" says one of these matrons, "*what torments hast thou prepared for thyself! couldst thou have foreseen them, never wouldst thou have married.*" "*Ah!*" says another, "*into what an error hast thou fallen! Canst thou believe that thou wilt pass a single minute in the married state without shedding tears of blood?*" "*The pains of child-birth,*" says a third, "*are nothing in comparison with those thy husband will make thee suffer; he will be thy tyrant, and thou wilt be his victim.*"

These prophecies are fully justified by the event: the Indian female experiences the most cruel treatment; every species of labour is performed by her, whilst the barbarous husband, stretched in his hammock, smokes his pipe and swallows spirituous liquors, without addressing a single word to his fatigued and exhausted companion.

The Otomaques are the only Indians who admit their women to participate in their diversions: among them, as elsewhere, the whole weight of domestic labour falls upon the females; but they are at least allowed occasionally to associate in their public amuse-

ments. They are besides the only tribe among whom the practice of polygamy is not admitted. A singular custom also prevails among these Otomaques, of always uniting a young man to an old woman, and an old woman to a young man: the reason assigned by them for establishing such alliances, is, that the older party is thus enabled to guide and instruct the younger. The other Indians marry as many wives as they please; but they are all, without distinction, equally oppressed, equally unfortunate.

From the practice of polygamy, we may naturally infer the frequency of divorces; and in fact a single word from a discontented husband, is sufficient to effect a separation from a wife, who is, by this means, condemned to perpetual infamy.

It has been affirmed, that jealousy cannot exist independently of love; notwithstanding, by a kind of fatality attached to the Indian women, the same man who never regards them with the eye of affection, punishes with the greatest severity their slightest infidelities. Among the Caribs adulterers are put to death by the people, in the public streets; but among the greatest part of the other tribes, the husband himself takes vengeance upon the offending wife, and his vengeance is always commensurate to the offence.

Another practice common among these people, is that of exchanging their wives with each other for a limited time; at the expiration of which, they are received back without the smallest objection being started on either side.

From the manners of the Indians, we may readily conceive what kind of education they bestow upon their children; it is sufficient to have seen them as husbands, to be convinced how ill they must perform the duty of parents. From the tenderness they sometimes bestow upon their young children, they have been pronounced not wholly destitute of parental affection; but these demonstrations of kindness proceed from a different nature. As soon as the children are able to procure sustenance for themselves, the father never thinks more of them, but to give them lessons of laziness, drunkenness, falsehood, and deceit. On the contrary, there are no children more unnatural than those of the Indians. Far from respecting the author of their being, they bear towards him the most implacable hatred, and frequently wait with impatience, until their own increasing strength, and his weakness, enable them to lift their hand against his life; and this species of outrage is always committed with impunity. The Indian children bear not, however, the same hatred towards their mother: witnesses of her sufferings, and the companions of her unfortunate life, until they arrive at a state of adolescence, they feel for her sentiments of pity, which ripen into affection.

An Indian never believes himself in a proper costume unless his whole body be covered with red paint. Even infants at the

breast are bedaubed in the same manner, twice a day. It is a law of hospitality among these tribes, when a stranger arrives at their dwelling, to cause the women to remove the paint from their bodies and apply it anew. On the occasion of any public festival, in addition to the red paint, they ornament the body with designs of different colours, and the men appear with plumes of feathers on their head, and bits of gold or silver suspended from the ears and nose.

Such were the men with whom the Spaniards found it necessary to dispute the possession of Terra-Firma; and such at this day are those tribes, who have still preserved their independence, notwithstanding the arms of the conqueror, and the religion of the missionary.

The greatest number of these tribes are found towards the south-west of Guiana, and above the cataracts of Atures. The zeal of the Franciscan mission of Cumana has been vainly exerted to overcome their antipathy to a civilized life. If they suffered their approach, it was only in order more easily to deceive them. If they apparently listened to their discourses, it was with the view of obtaining those small presents which were bestowed as a reward for their attention. The deserts, lakes, mountains, and rivers, presented obstacles to the missionaries, which it was impossible for them to surmount. It is indeed highly probable that the immense tract of country situated between the sources of the Oroonoko and the Amazons, will long remain unsubdued.

This nation, which occupies the numerous islands formed by the Oroonoko, is also one of those which have neither received the Spanish laws, nor the Christian religion. Situated between the civilized part of Spanish Guiana, and the province of Cumana, they remain independent of the Spanish government, and atheists in the midst of Christians.

The Guaraunos amount to eight thousand souls, and except the Otomaques, are the gayest of the Indian tribes. They frequent the civilized villages to the north and south of the Oroonoko, in order to sell fish, which they always procure in great abundance, as well as a kind of hammocks of their own manufacture. The missionaries never fail on the occasion of these visits to renew their attempts to convert them to Christianity, and to give them a relish for civilized life; but if we are to judge from their want of success, for more than a century past, these Indians prefer the savage state more from choice than from ignorance of the conveniences attached to civilized life. Politically speaking, their independence is a matter of great indifference to the Spanish government, since they neither possess the power, nor evince the smallest inclination, to interfere with any of their concerns.

Extremely different, however, is the character of the Goahiros, who occupy a tract of country situated between the district of Maracaybo, and the Rio, or river de la Hache, extending more than thirty leagues along the coast, and as far into the interior of the country. They have at all times been regarded as the most ferocious of the maritime Indians. The Spaniards never attempted to subjugate them. At the period when the system of missions was adopted, they sent among the Goahiros, Capuchins from the kingdom of Valence, who, with much patience and perseverance, endeavoured to imbue their minds with the truths of Christianity, and to convince them of the necessity of subordination to the Spanish authority. Some hopes were even entertained that these attempts might have ultimately succeeded; when an event that occurred in 1766, replunged them into all their original barbarity.

A missionary being informed that an Indian from a neighbouring village came regularly to pass his nights with an Indian female, living near the residence of this Capuchin, ordered him to be secured and whipt. This order was, unfortunately, too punctually executed, and the Indian retired to his friends thirsting for vengeance against his persecutor. The whole nation instantly took arms, and fell upon the village where the chastisement had been inflicted. They indiscriminately murdered all the inhabitants, and destroyed, and set fire to every thing which fell in their way. Although the missionaries were solely to blame in this transaction, they alone had the good fortune to escape.

Since this unfortunate affair, it would prove certain destruction for any missionary to appear among this tribe. They are in number about thirty thousand, and are governed by a cacique, for whom they have erected a citadel, on a small eminence, which they term *la Teta*, at a few leagues distance from the sea. They breed horses, on which their troops are mounted, and each soldier carries his carabine, cartouch-box, and his bow and quiver.

They have found in the English of Jamaica, friends who aid them with their counsel, and supply them with what arms they stand in need of. So intimate a connection subsists between this tribe and these islanders, that they send their children to Jamaica to learn the use of arms, and the proper mode of managing artillery. This strange policy of the English can have no other motive but that of securing allies, in the event of undertaking an hostile expedition against Terra-Firma.

The Spanish city most frequented by the Goahiros, is that of Rio de la Hache, dependant on the vice-royalty of Santa-Fé; they proceed thither in large companies, to traffic with the inhabitants, frequently preceded by their wives, who not only carry the children, but are loaded like beasts of burden. They have

never adopted the use of money; they usually give horses and black cattle in exchange for ardent spirits, to which they are passionately attached. When their wants are extremely pressing, they threaten the nearest city or village; and the Spaniards generally find it necessary to sacrifice a few casks of spirits, in order to procure peace. Such is the perfidy and ferocity of the Goahiros, that their friends, the English, seldom land in their country, from a dread of being assassinated. Their exchanges are usually made on ship-board. Any vessels unfortunately wrecked upon their shores, instantly become a prey to the ferocity of these cannibals, who pillage the cargo, and murder and divide the crew amongst them.

Towards the east of the Goahiros territory, dwells the tribe of *Cocinas;* but they are so cowardly and pusillanimous, that the former maintain over them all that ascendency which courage must ever possess over timidity. These savages are, indeed, properly speaking, only the vassals of the Goahiros.

The necessity of subjugating the Goahiros Indians, is fully acknowledged by the rulers of Terra-Firma. The present governor of Maracaybo, D. Fernando Miyares Gonzales, a man of talent, employs every means in his power to repress the excesses of which they are frequently guilty. In 1801, he had forty-nine of them as hostages in the prisons of Maracaybo; one of them was a cousin of the cacique, and him he refused to surrender, until his tribe first delivered up Martin Rodrigues, a mulatto of Rio de la Hache, who had stimulated them to some hostile enterprises against the Spanish settlements. This demand not having been complied with, the Indians, as late as 1803, still remained in the power of the Spaniards. Various representations have been made at different periods to the viceroy of Santa-Fé, requesting permission to attack Goahiros on the west, while an enterprise was undertaken at the same time, on the side of Maracaybo. The viceroy, who lives at two hundred leagues distance, cannot issue the necessary orders, without first requesting the advice of the governor of Rio de la Hache, who has hitherto succeeded in delaying, and sometimes even in putting a decided negative upon the measure.

The system of rigour adopted by the first conquerors of Spanish America, was quickly succeeded by one of greater mildness and humanity. Few foreign writers have rendered complete justice to the Spaniards in this respect. The Abbe Raynal, more enthusiastic than impartial, more vehement than accurate, gives a picture of the state of the South American Indians, which is not applicable to any of the Spanish possessions, and still less to that of the captain-generalship of Carraccas. Robertson, a more correct

historian, though also a philosopher, approaches nearer to the truth; but the Spanish laws are even more favourable to the Indians, than he is inclined to represent them.

The Spanish legislature appears to have given to this class of men, all the advantages it did not believe to be incompatible with their dependance on the mother country.

The principal regulations adopted by the mother country, to ensure their sovereignty over America, was to deprive the Indians of all weapons whatever, either offensive or defensive; to interdict the practice of riding on horse-back; to prevent an Indian from learning the use of arms, or remaining in the house of any person from whom they could acquire the least idea of fabricating, repairing, or handling them; they likewise forced them to live united in villages, and never to remove from one place to another, or to change their abode, under pain of receiving twenty strokes with a rod: and the cacique who had permitted it, was fined at the same time forty piastres; the Spaniards and mulattoes are interdicted from taking up their abode in any of the Indian villages, from a dread that they might diffuse among the inhabitants, ideas destructive of public tranquillity.

The first act of generosity of the Spanish government in favour of the Indians, was that of allowing them to choose magistrates from among themselves. All the villages, under the Spanish dominions, are governed by a cacique, descended from a family holding that rank before the conquest, if any such exist, otherwise he is named by the king. But it is indispensible that he be an Indian, without any mixture of European or African blood.

In the provinces dependant on Carraccas, the Indian villages are governed by a cabildo or municipality, composed of two alcades, and two Indian regidors, if there be more than eighty houses. The principal duty of these magistrates, is to repress drunkenness, libertinism, and impiety; but so infected are they themselves with the same vices, that not unfrequently, their example tends to propagate and extend them. In order, as far as possible, to remedy these and similar abuses, the Spanish government has interposed between the magistrates and the people, a corregidor, as he is termed in Terra-Firma, or a protector of the Indians, as they style him in other parts of America. This functionary is always a Spaniard, and is obliged to reside in the Indian village over which he is appointed; his duty is to prevent the Indian magistrates from abusing their authority, or inflicting excessive and disproportionate chastisements. The fiscals, or *procureurs generaux* of the courts of audience, are appointed to defend the Indians, both in civil and criminal causes.

The caciques, and their descendants, enjoy all the privileges of the Spanish nation. The Indians are exempted from the *alca-*

cala, or annual tribute on every male from the age of eighteen to fifty; but the most valuable privilege accorded to them, is that of being considered as minors. They are not obliged to fulfil any contract entered into with a Spaniard, without the intervention of the judges; and such compacts are seldom found valid, when they appear to be evidently detrimental to the Indian.

The Inquisition, which maintains an absolute sway over the consciences of all Spaniards, assumes no right over those of the Indians. When they are charged with the crimes of heresy and apostacy, it is referred to the tribunal of bishops; and for any other crimes, they are amenable to the civil tribunals. The only instruction necessary to fit an adult Indian for baptism, is, that he should be able to indicate, either by signs, or in words, that idolatry, the worship of images, lying, and superstition, are mortal sins; that fornication, adultery, incest, and sodomy, are horrible sins; and that drunkenness, is likewise a sin.

It is a general practice, to cut off the hair of an adult on his receiving baptism; and this custom the early missionaries observed with respect to the converted Indians; but these savages have such a particular affection for their hair, that sooner than part with it, they chose rather that the gates of heaven should for ever remain shut against them. The king being informed of this obstacle to their conversion, ordered that it should be discontinued, in opposition to the precept of Saint Paul on the subject.

Notwithstanding all the pains taken by the missionaries, it has been found impossible to imbue the minds of the Indians with the necessity of confession; if they ever approach the confessional chair, it is neither with a view of acknowledging their sins, nor of correcting them. It is seldom they even assume the posture of a penitent; if they kneel on entering, they very soon seat themselves on the ground, and instead of declaring their sins, they strenuously deny having committed those which the priest urges home to them, from a previous knowledge of their habits. It is only after being clearly convicted of falsehood, that they allow themselves to have been culpable in any respect; and when driven to this extremity, they frequently load with curses those who have informed the priest. A similar confession would not be admitted from a Spaniard, or any other christian; but made by an Indian, it has been declared valid by different learned theologians, provided the confessor can extort from him a token of contrition, a condition that is easily fulfilled by dictating an act of repentance, which the Indian confusedly mutters after his spiritual guide. His ignorance is so great, and his faculties so limited, that nothing more it is believed can be required of him; and in conformity to the theological maxim, *facienti quod est in se*,

Deus non denegat auxilium, they conclude that the Indian is also properly and duly confessed.

By a special indulgence from the Pope, they are not obliged to confess during the pascal season; it is sufficient if they confess once a year, even *extra tempora paschæ*.

They are not obliged to attend mass above one half of the number of holydays prescribed to the Spaniards, and even the slightest excuse is deemed sufficient to exempt them from the performance of this duty.

To conclude, so fully are the missionaries persuaded that the only way to bring these savages within the pale of the church, is to give them the tastes and habits of civilized life, that it became a matter of dispute, whether or not they ought to be permitted to eat human flesh; and what adds to the singularity of the question, is, that it was decided in the affirmative. Montenegro, supporting his opinions from the doctrine of Lesio and Diana, seriously asserts in his *Itinerario de Parochos de Indios, lib.* 4. *trat.* 5. *sect.* 9. *num.* 8. *that in case of necessity they may eat human flesh without any species of sin, because it is not in itself evil.* But how, we are fairly intitled to enquire, can a case of such urgent necessity occur in the most fertile spot of the globe, covered with forests, abounding in game, and watered by rivers full of turtle and various species of fishes?

From what has been said, it must be evident what great efforts have been made by the Spanish missions, gently to lead the Indians of Terra-Firma from a savage to a civilized life. What people so barbarous, that so many cares would not have softened, or that would have remained insensible from generation to generation? The most ferocious animals, in the end, afford demonstrations of gratitude to those who continually caress them. The Indian alone possesses an indifference, an apathy which is found in no other living being. His heart, shut equally to pleasure as to hope, is accessible only to terror. A stranger to courage, cowardice and timidity are his only inheritance: his soul is without resource, his mind destitute of activity. Incapable of conceiving or of reasoning, he passes his days in a kind of stupor, which indicates that he has no idea of his own nature, or of the objects by which he is surrounded. His ambition or his desires never reach beyond the present moment. This character is somewhat less prominent in those Indians who reside in cities, than among those who inhabit the villages under the direction of the curé or Spanish corregidor; although four or five generations have passed away since their quitting the savage state.

Neither the instruction they have received on entering into society, nor the favours with which they have been treated, are found sufficient to inspire them with a disrelish for the savage

state; although the present generation know it only by tradition. There are, in fact, few Indians who do not sigh after a life in the forests, and who do not retire thither whenever they can escape the vigilance of their governors: and this propensity does not proceed from a love of liberty, but from the opportunity such a life affords them of indulging their melancholy, superstition, and contempt for the most sacred rights of nature.

There are perhaps no other human beings in a state less proper to be converted to christianity than a South American Indian. Too limited in his capacity to seize its truths; too indolent to elevate his views to heaven; too little accustomed to reflect, to conceive even the existence of *one God*, he neither occupies his mind with his present nor his future state of existence. He listens to the doctrines which have been taught him, and even repeats them with an air of docility which has the appearance of submission, but which in fact proceeds from his want of curiosity. If the idea of one God be so far above his capacity, how incomprehensible to him must be the mysteries on which the christian religion is founded? An Indian never refuses to believe any doctrine which is inculcated upon him, nor does he withhold marks of his approbation from the preacher; but his incredulity is manifested by his rooted distaste for the exercises of religion, except so far as they consist in show, the noise of bells, or the sound of musical instruments; but sermons, catechisms, low masses, confession, and fasts, are to him the most insupportable of all burdens. His countenance in the church is a proof of the little interest he takes in what is going forwards. Constantly covered with rags, which ill supply the fig-leaves adopted by our first parents on eating the forbidden fruit, and frequently even entirely naked, he remains lying or squatted down during the whole of divine service. The more faith he professes in the doctrines of christianity, the more does he pass for an idiot among his companions. The only dogma fully received by the Indians, is a belief in the power of the devil. Age, so far from increasing their faith, on the contrary, erases from their minds the slightest impressions they had received in their youth in favour of christianity; it is not a rare occurrence to see Indians ridiculing the sermons at which they have been present, and endeavouring to destroy in their offspring the salutary effects they might have produced. These old men, scattered among the hearers during divine service, criticise with the greatest severity every word uttered by the preacher. When speaking of the power and goodness of God, an Indian will reply in a low voice: *why, if he be so good and so powerful, does he not give us something to eat without our being obliged to labour?* If the pains of hell be the subject, he replies: *has he seen it? who told him so? who has returned from it?* If mortification and absti-

nence constitute the topic of his discourse, the Indian asks: *why does not the priest, who inculcates this doctrine, practise it himself?* If confession be the subject, he attributes it to the curiosity of the father, and affirms that God does not require to be told what is done by the Indians; so that with these and similar commentaries, the sermon is usually more hurtful than beneficial to the progress of faith.

From what has been said, we conceive it must be admitted, that even those Indians who have been under the protection of the Spanish laws for upwards of a hundred and fifty years, approach more nearly to a state of barbarism than civilization. The cause of this might well be looked for in the nature of this species of men, whose excessive stupidity caused, at one time, the question to be agitated, whether they really possessed the faculty of reason; and it was only after a very serious examination, that Paul the third declared in 1537 in favour of the affirmative. *Indos ipsos*, says the bull, *utpote, veros homines, non solum christianæ fidei capaces existere decernimus et declaramus.* It is, however, highly probable that under a different system of government, their inaptitude in acquiring knowledge, might in a great measure be overcome. It appears to me that this part of the population of Terra-Firma, would have been less immersed in superstition and vice, if they had made a law obliging every Indian to perform a certain degree of labour, and at the same time assured him of receiving the full reward of his exertion. By rendering these men laborious, they would at the same time have rendered them good fathers, good husbands, and good christians; because all the social virtues flow from the love of labour.

The Indian population in the captain-generalship of Carraccas amounts to seventy-two thousand eight hundred individuals of all ages and sexes. By employing them in easy labour, such as in the culture of cotton and coffee, in which the women, the old men, and the children might likewise be useful, there would necessarily result a great augmentation of commodities, and a considerable increase of commerce.

Supposing that these seventy-two thousand Indians only performed one-half of the daily labour of an European, and that in place of a thousand pounds of coffee, for example, he should only raise five hundred pounds, even this would be a means of adding eighteen millions twelve hundred and fifty pounds to that exported at present; the produce of which would serve to purchase many objects of European manufacture. By such means new energy would be given to navigation and commerce, which would be attended with advantages so evident, that I deem it wholly unnecessary to occupy the time of my reader in detailing them.

CHAP. IV.

SPANISH GOVERNMENT IN CARRACCAS.—COUNCIL OF THE INDIES.—REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KING.—ROYAL AUDIENCE.—CABILDOS.—THEIR ESTABLISHMENT IN SPAIN, AND IN AMERICA.—LIEUTENANTS OF JUSTICE.—OTHER TRIBUNALS.—MILITARY FUERO.—REFLECTIONS ON THE SPANISH LAWS.—ARMED FORCE.—DEFENCE OF THE SEA-PORTS.—LANDING UPON THE COASTS.—ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMED FORCE.—TROOPS OF THE LINE.—MILITIA.

IT may readily be supposed, that the political and civil constitution of the Spanish possessions in the new world, could only be the work of time; it far exceeded all human power to establish, at the period of their discovery, a complete code of laws for countries till then unknown, and for settlements of a nature so very different from those of ancient and modern times.

The idea of converting countries of such an immense extent into dependencies on the Spanish crown, naturally suggested that of establishing the same constituted authorities in them, as in the mother country. The supreme power was vested in chiefs, under the title of viceroys or captains-general.

The Spanish possessions in South America are divided into four vice-royalties, viz. Mexico, Peru, Buenos-Ayres, and Santa Fé; and six captain-generalships, viz. Porto Rico, Havannah, Carraccas, Guatimala, Chili, and the Philippine islands in Asia.

The police was, as in old Spain, committed to the superintendence of the cabildos. At first they established them in every village as soon as it was founded; even when the population did not exceed thirty individuals, they built a church and established a cabildo; but for the last century they have not appointed alcades and regidors until the inhabitants became more numerous.

For the administration of justice there are at present thirteen courts of audience, which hold their sittings at Mexico, Guadalaxara, Guatimala, the isle of Cuba, Lima, Charcas, Chili, Santa Fé, Quito, Buenos-Ayres, Carraccas, Cusco, and the Phi-

lippines. The religious establishment consists of bishoprics, chapters, and convents; besides which there are several archbishoprics, and thirty-seven vicarages.

The power delegated to these different authorities is extended or restrained according to circumstances; but the viceroys enjoy too many opportunities of abusing the prerogative entrusted to them.

The cabildos, who are composed of creoles, or Spaniards destined to pass their lives in America, generally sacrifice the interests of the mother country to those of her colonies; on which account it has been found necessary to restrain their power.

The case is, however, different with respect to the courts of audience, the members of which are all in the immediate pay of the king; it is the royal authority alone which can confer on them promotion, and the law leaves at their disposal no efficient force to undertake any enterprize that can endanger the authority of the mother country. It was not then dangerous, on the contrary, it could not but prove useful, to invest these superior tribunals with great authority, to serve as a check to the ambition of the chiefs, and with a view to prevent any acts of injustice they might be otherwise led to commit.

Religion has also contributed to cement the royal authority in South America; it is an engine which politicians always know how to render available for their own purposes.

All the laws respecting South America, which were found useful on trial, have been collected together, and form a code for the Spanish possessions under the title of the *laws of the Indies*. This respectable tribunal, to which the Spanish throne owes all its lustre, dates its origin from 1511. The great qualities necessary in order to be admitted one of its members, have operated to produce, in the public mind, a degree of respect for this tribunal, so much the more merited, as its decisions have been uniformly marked by impartiality, wisdom, and experience.

Its jurisdiction extends over all the Spanish settlements in South America and the West Indies. It takes cognizance by a kind of appeal, termed by the Spaniards *recurso*, of all causes determined before the courts of audience: all its deliberations are determined by a majority of voices, except in enacting or revoking laws, in which case, according to the constitution, two-thirds are requisite.

Appointments to all civil and ecclesiastical employments, rewards due to meritorious services, superintendence of the tribunals, the military, finances, and commerce, all depend on the council of the Indies. Its power, which has gradually augmented, has never been abused: it is at present so powerful as to be paramount over all Spanish America. Its integrity operates so

much to defeat all intrigue, that every Spaniard whose cause is not founded on principles of justice, employs all his efforts to withdraw it from the council of the Indies.

The immediate representative of the king in the government of Venezuela and its dependencies, is a captain-general, who acts also as governor and president of the royal court of audience, and of all the tribunals, excepting those which regulate taxes, and superintend the interests of commerce. As captain-general, the authority of the governor extends over all the provinces of Venezuela, Maracaybo, Varinas, Guiana, Cumana, and the island of Marguerite. Every thing relative to fortifications, arms, defence, in short, the whole military department is immediately under his controul. In matters of great moment, however, he frequently has recourse to an assembly or commission, composed of the first military officers, which is denominated the *junta de guerra*.

To him also it belongs exclusively, to watch over the political relations between his own department and foreign colonies. As governor, his authority is limited to the province of Venezuela. Guiana, &c. have also their particular governors, to whom the same powers are delegated as to the governor of the Carraccas. They are nominated for the period of five years. In all criminal and civil causes every governor is obliged to employ a lawyer or jurisconsult, who arranges and signs the decisions. He is appointed and paid by the king, exclusively of the fees he receives from the causes which come under his cognizance. These decisions, however, are of no force without the signature of the governor. If they appear to be contrary to justice, he may transmit them to another assessor, named *ad hoc*, who can reverse them. The governor may, if he choose, decide in opposition to the opinion of the jurisconsults; but he seldom employs this power unless when he can justify the part he has taken. Besides these prerogatives, the governor possesses that of presiding over the court of audience. When he arrives, the guard is drawn out, and the cry resounds—"*His excellency, the president!*" All the civilians and scriveners, &c. wait upon him and follow in his train. On entering the court, all the audience rise up and receive him: when the sitting is terminated, he is re-conducted to his palace with similar honours.

It is the undoubted right of the governor, president, and captain-general, in doubtful cases not provided for by the law, to take the measures he may deem best calculated to secure the public tranquillity; but the responsibility to which he is liable renders him cautious in the exercise of this right. The powers with which he is invested are unquestionably great; but they are more so in appearance than in reality. To the vulgar, who are ever ready to confound honours with power, he appears almost

omnipotent, whilst in the eye of the law his power of justice is alone unlimited. His ambition and tyranny are restrained by the strict account he must give of all his official acts at the expiration of his government.

According to the constitution of the Indies, nothing has been overlooked that could render these representatives of majesty *isolated beings*. All their affections are kept enchained. They must not possess throughout the whole extent of their jurisdiction more than four slaves; they are prevented from carrying on any kind of trade, from marrying, themselves or children, from being present at weddings or funerals, or from acting as sponsors at the baptismal font.

The salary of the captain-general of the Carraccas is 9,000 piastres annually; and the perquisites attached to the office nearly double this sum. He can only remain in power for the term of seven years, unless when war, or any other unforeseen circumstance, occurs to prevent the appointment of a successor.

In case of sickness he may delegate his powers to the next in succession; but as soon as he receives the sacrament he possesses no longer any choice. The commander in chief immediately assumes the reins of government, and the governor cannot resume his functions until his complete recovery has been fully ascertained.

All the district which at present forms the audience of Carraccas made a part of that of St. Domingo, from the discovery of Terra-Firma until 1718, at which period it was put under the jurisdiction of the audience of Santa-Fé. The great distance of this city from the Carraccas, the difficulty, and sometimes even the impossibility of travelling, particularly in times of war, joined to other circumstances, induced the Spanish government to establish by a royal order in 1786, the audience comprehending the provinces of Venezuela, Maracaybo, Cumana, Verinas, Guiana, and the island of Marguerite. This court held its first sitting in July, 1787.

It is composed of a president, who is always the captain-general for the time being; a regent, with a salary of 5,500 piastres; three oidors, with salaries of 3,500 piastres; two fiscals, one for the civil and criminal department, and the other for that of the finance, with each a salary of 3,300 piastres; a reporter with 500 piastres, and a right to fees in causes between parties; and an alguazel, without any salary but what he receives voluntarily.

The judges dress in black, and wear a black silk robe made in the form of a mantle. They formerly wore a white wand, suspended from one of their buttons, which in Spain is regarded as an emblem of jurisdiction, before which every one trembles. This court sits every day from eight o'clock in the morning till

noon, but they dispatch very few causes, owing to having but one reporter, and the manner they have adopted in receiving the reports, which is to hear read all the papers connected with any cause, and these pieces are in general very voluminous.

The courts of audience are highly respected by the Spaniards, and when we consider the integrity and intelligence of the members who in general compose them, we cease to be surprised that they should receive testimonies of submission bordering on adoration. The tribunal of audience, beside acting as a court of appeal, possess other prerogatives, which render them in some measure defenders of public liberty and supporters of the royal authority. It will be sufficient to convey some idea of the extent of their powers, to inform the reader that the sentences of the ecclesiastical tribunals are subject to their revisal. They likewise take cognizance of any disputes respecting the limits of the jurisdiction of the secular and spiritual courts; and in one word, they hold a supremacy over that *power* to which every other must bow with reverence.

The king recommends to the viceroys and captains-general to consult the courts of audience respecting any objects of government of an extaordinary nature; and by different schedules it is ordered, that the decisions of the audiences be held in the same respect as if they had emanated from the king himself.

These tribunals have the privilege of corresponding with the king, to the exclusion of the viceroys, presidents, and captains-general; they can propose to his majesty whatever appears proper in affairs of government, or in the administration of justice. It is to the royal audiences that the king and the council of the Indies apply for information in any case wherein the viceroys or governors have abused their powers. It is to them also that the most important commissions are entrusted, except in what regards he military department.

Formerly they were invested with the right of exercising the functions of the viceroys and governors, when absent or deceased, until the appointment of others in their stead; but it has lately been deemed improper to trust the military defence of the country to men whose situations and education render them wholly ignonorant of the art of war; any vacancies are therefore at present filled up by the commander in chief of the army, untill the instalment of a successor.

The institution of the cabildos is merely municipal, and has been established in all the villages of Spanish America. Having however no other tribunal to counteract their influence in the provinces dependant on Carraccas, their power quickly became much more extensive and formidable than it had ever been in the mother country. It is not then to be wondered at, that the Spanish government does not increase their number, and that it daily endeavours

to diminish the influence of those which already exist. They are now placed under the superintendence of the military commander, and are almost wholly dependant on the lieutenants of the governors, or civil officers nominated by the governors, with the title of *Justicia Mayor*.

Whatever alterations time and other circumstances may have made in the prerogatives of the cabildos, their organization and mode of election continues the same as at first.

Each have two alcades, termed ordinaries, who are elected yearly on the first of January by the votes of the regidors. The situation of these last is permanent, and their number is in proportion to the importance of the city where the cabildo is established. That of Carraccas is composed of— .

1st. The governor of the province, who is president of all the cabildos in his district.

2d. Two alcades or ordinaries, the first of whom is called *Alcade de primer voto*: it is to him that they present the *la vara* of justice, which was formerly done by the members of the audience.

3d. Twelve regidors, whose appointments are transferable. These regidors have a right to bestow them on any individual possessing the necessary qualifications for holding this office, provided the donor survive the transaction twenty-one days.

4th. Four additional regidors, which the king, on a proposition from the governor, confers gratuitously on citizens born in Spain, and naturalized in the city.

5th. Four officers termed *de officio*, with the titles of *alferez real, provincial alcade*, of *alguazil mayor*, and *fiel executor*. These last purchase their employments. The first is attached to the house *Palacios y sodo* at Carraccas.

All the members possess a deliberative voice, and this cabildo is likewise provided with a syndic, who has a deliberative voice. The other cabildos established in the different provinces of Carraccas have fewer members, but none of them have less than two alcades and six regidors.

The law expressly prohibits the interference of the viceroys, presidents, and oidors in the election of the alcades. A precedent has, however, crept in, by which a list of the candidates is sent to the governor for his approbation, and in places where no governor resides, it is presented to the *justicia mayor*.

The qualities necessary to render an individual eligible to the office of alcade, are, to be naturalized in the district, to possess a knowledge of reading and writing, joined to the other circumstances requisite in those who occupy distinguished employments in the Spanish empire.

Military officers, excepting those serving in the militia, royal officers, and those who hold their employments immediately from the king, are ineligible to the office of alcade. In case of the death or absence of an ordinary alcade, the senior regidor exercises the functions of his office. The cabildos hold their sittings on fixed days, and have no power to call an extraordinary meeting without informing the governor or his representative what is the subject on which they incline to deliberate.

The deliberations of the cabildos, the schedules of the king, the dispatches of the governors, are all entered in registers kept for this purpose.

In places where no cabildo is established, the police and administration of justice is committed to the care of a *single individual*, dignified by the governor with the title of *lieutenant de justice*. His jurisdiction usually extends over three or four villages. No other person has any right, direct or indirect, to interfere in public affairs. His power is nearly as unlimited as it is undivided. He is accountable to the governor alone for those measures he may deem it proper to adopt for public security.

The lieutenants of justice are nominated for two years, but they are indefinitely re-eligible. Their decisions may be brought by appeal before a court of audience; but the ignorance of the witnessess leave them every possible latitude to give any turn they think proper to the cause, and it seldom happens that the documents presented to the court of appeal contain any but those which appear to justify the sentence.

To be nominated to the office of lieutenant of justice, is considered as the infallible means of accumulating an immense fortune. Hence as soon as a vacancy occurs, it is canvassed for with a violence proportionate to the great advantages to be derived from the appointment; and it too frequently happens that patronage, family influence, and importunity, force the governor to nominate to this important office an individual very ill qualified to fulfil its duties.

At Goayre, Porto-Cabello, and even at Coro, the military commanders exercise all the functions of lieutenants of justice; an abuse which it is to be hoped cannot long escape the vigilant eye of the Spanish minister.

Besides those we have already mentioned, there are several other tribunals, which we shall notice when treating of those matters that fall under their special cognizance. It is sufficient to observe at present, that the Spaniards being divided into privileged classes, are not subjected to a common jurisdiction. The ecclesiastics, the military, the members of the government, have each their peculiar and appropriate tribunals. As these three professions are exercised by a great part of the white population,

it is evident that very few of the distinguished inhabitants are subject to the jurisdiction of the ordinary tribunals. These privileges are termed *fueros*, and to a cursory observer they appear extremely proper, since they provide that the members of each profession shall be judged by their peers. But the exercise of this *fuero* is not however uniform; for a private soldier is condemned upon the sentence of a council of war confirmed by the captain-general, whilst the life and honour of an officer is under the direct and immediate protection of the king.

I was present at a council of war held at Carraccas towards the end of 1802, respecting the delivery by the English sailors at Porto-Bello of the Hermoine frigate three years before. The papers contained in this process were composed of seven hundred and ninety leaves, the reading of which occupied the court three whole days.

In general the forms of the Spanish tribunals are complicated, slow, and particularly expensive. In fact, the citizens may be divided into two classes; the one is ruined, and the other enriched by the chicane of the law. What with judges, advocates, notaries, writers, alguazils, and clerks, there are in Carraccas six hundred persons connected with the courts of law, of whom four hundred at least are married and have families; so that it may be justly affirmed that more than two thousand individuals subsist by the toil and labour of the unfortunate clients.

The defence of the provinces of Venezuela, Maracaybo, Varinas, Guiana, Cumana, and the island of Marguerite, is confided to the captain-general resident in Carraccas. The governors of the different provinces have a right, provisionally, to take such measures as circumstances may appear to require; but of which they must render an account to the captain-general, and it is by his orders that they are put in execution. It appears, on a cursory view of the subject, that by this plan a more extensive and effectual defence might be made against an enemy, than if each province acted separately and independent of one another. This would in fact be the case, if the immense distance which separates them did not prevent the prompt union of the common forces; but situated as they are, it would perhaps be better that each governor was left at liberty to pursue the impulse of his honour, and the dictates of his judgment, than to depend on the orders of a captain-general, residing at the distance of a hundred leagues from the nearest of these provinces, and whose disapprobation he may dread to incur, should the account he transmits not appear to justify the provisional measures entered upon for the security of his particular province.

The first attempt made by an enemy upon the Carraccas, will naturally be by sea; and, however small their force, it must be supe-

rior to that by which these coasts are protected; as the Spaniards have never more on this station than a few armed vessels intended to check the contraband trade, and a single frigate. It is therefore evident that the defence by sea is perfectly inadequate. Let us next examine what resistance they can make to an attack upon their forts.

Maracaybo is separated from the province of Venezuela by a lake of the same name, and by deserts of more than sixty leagues in extent, lying between it and Truxillo, which is the first city likely to afford any effectual assistance in case of an attack; and even this cannot be obtained without the consent of the captain-general. Three forts guard the entrance to the port. Its garrison consists of four companies of troops of the line, and nine companies of militia, five of which are whites, and four people of colour. The population of the city is reckoned at twenty-five thousand souls.

Coro, which is situated sixty leagues east of Maracaybo, is better protected by the sterility of its soil, and the poverty of its inhabitants, than by its troops; it is neither well calculated for trade, nor as a point of debarkation for an invading army.

The port, which is best defended of any in the captain-generalship of the Carraccas, is doubtless Porto-Cavello, which is fifty-five leagues to the east of Coro. Its chief defence is a strong fort well mounted with long cannon, erected upon an island to the north-east of the city, and some smaller ones upon the eastern angle of a high mountain. There is no stationary garrison at Porto-Cavello; the regiment of Carraccas furnish in time of peace a company, which is relieved once a year. During war the troops of the line are doubled, and reinforced from the militia of Valence, and the valley of Aragoa; and in case of an attack, they can easily collect at this point, in the course of eight days, an army of three thousand men.

There are, however, still more perhaps to be expected from the courage and activity of the inhabitants of Porto-Cavello, than from the militia, whose motions are always tardy, and their valour equivocal. This port when attacked by the English in 1743, owed its deliverance to the Biscayens established in it; and the present inhabitants of that nation do not yield in zeal or courage to their predecessors.

The city of Cumana, about a hundred leagues east of Goayre, is sufficiently difficult of access from the sea, to preclude any attempts of an enemy to land in that quarter. Situated near the shore, and its port being half a league to leward, it has nothing to dread but an attack from shipping, which, owing to the distance, must ultimately prove abortive. In the event of a landing, which is an occurrence highly improbable, a strong fort erected on an eminence, towards the eastern part of the city,

would oppose a formidable obstacle to the progress of an invading army. Besides which, three companies of troops of the line, that form the garrison; the militia, composed of eleven companies of whites, two of artillery, two of cavalry, eleven of people of colour, three of black infantry, a demi-company of artillery, and the inhabitants of the city and its environs, forming in the whole a corps of five thousand men, would be found ready to sacrifice their lives in defence of their families and property.

The island of Marguerite, which lies four leagues to the north of Cumana, is strong by nature, and defended by a company of troops of the line, besides the militia, consisting of four companies of infantry, one of artillery, one of cavalry, and four companies of infantry of people of colour. This island is extremely barren, admitting only of the culture of cotton, and even that but partially: as a commercial or military station, however, it is extremely desirable. On proceeding to the east from Cumana, and doubling Cape Paria, towards the south, we discover no other ports but that of Guiana.

Whatever may be the strength of these forts, or their means of defence, it must be evident, that on a coast where they are separated by a distance of sixty or a hundred leagues, and where, in the intervals, there is a vast number of rivers and commodious bays, for the debarkation of troops, they are not only useless but mischievous, from occupying a number of troops that might otherwise be brought to bear on any point where the danger was most threatening

For more than two hundred and fifty years after Spain was in possession of the province of Venezuela and its dependencies, their defence was solely trusted to a militia, organized by the different governors. It was not until July 1768, that a regiment was established at Carraccas, by an order from the king upon the military establishment. It ought to consist of two battalions of eight companies each, amounting in the whole to thirteen hundred and sixty-three men. From the difficulty, however, of procuring recruits, and the poverty of the treasury, they at first formed only one battalion, to which has since been added four companies; so that at present this corps is composed of twelve companies, making a total of nine hundred and eighteen men. The service assigned to this regiment is to guard the Carraccas, Goayre, and Porto Cavallo; it is chiefly recruited from Old Spain. The colonel of this corps is likewise a lieutenant of the king, and commander of the fortress; and all the officers of his staff likewise have rank in the garrison. This regiment does not include the troops of the line established at Maracaybo, Cumana, Guiana, and Varinas. The artillery corps of these

provinces are composed, in the department of the Carraccas, of a company of a hundred men, two companies of white militia, and four of people of colour; to the first there are attached two companies of blacks. In Cumana, and also at Guiana, of a company of engineers; and in Maracaybo, of a company of engineer militia, indiscriminately made up of blacks and people of colour.

It is a principle generally admitted among all nations, that the inhabitants of colonies ought to concur in their external and internal defence. Exposed by the nature of their population to more or less serious troubles, and by their position and value to the incursions of an enemy, it would in general prove ruinous to both the colony and the mother country, to keep up a sufficient military establishment for all the purposes of defence, without the concurrence of the colonists themselves.

Spain, whose attention and solicitude has, from the first conquest of South America, been solely directed towards the mines of Peru, only lately turned their thoughts to the formation of an effective militia in the provinces dependent on the Carraccas. By the application of the regulations of the 19th February, 1765, and those of January, 1769, transmitted for the organization of the militia in Porto-Rico and Cuba, to this part of Terra Firma, the militia forces are put on such a respectable footing, and so much resemble troops of the line, that the creoles of distinction conceive it the highest honour that can be conferred on them, to be appointed as officers in these different corps. The Marquis del Toro, one of the richest nobles of Carraccas, considers it is the greatest glory to be colonel of a battalion of the militia of the vallies of Aragoa; and Count Saint Zavier, who yields to none in respect to birth or wealth, reckons them as nothing in comparison with the honour conferred on him by the king in 1803, in appointing him to the command of a battalion of the militia of Carraccas. On the slightest rumour of war, these forces are bound to be in readiness to march at a moment's notice; and detachments are drafted from them in order to reinforce the garrisons of the seaport towns, and of the capital. They are trained to the use of arms; once a year the captain-general reviews those corps in his immediate neighbourhood; and each governor performs the same duty to those stationed in his particular district. The people of colour are formed into separate corps, and all the officers, up to the rank of captains, are so likewise; the superior officers must all be whites.

At Carraccas there is a battalion of white militia, and a squadron of whites, both established in 1771, as well as a battalion of people of colour.

At Valence there is also a battalion of white militia, the same

as at Carraccas; and another in the vallies of Aragoa; in both these places they have likewise a battalion of people of colour.

All the free inhabitants, from fifteen to forty-five, are liable to serve in the militia, except judges, advocates, notaries, agents of cities, physicians, apothecaries, surgeons, schoolmasters, &c.; but this exemption does not extend to the children and domestics of these classes of citizens.

When the militia are encamped or in garrison, the officers and soldiers receive the same pay as troops of the line. Desertion to the enemy in time of war is punishable with death; and absence without leave subjects the individual to two years confinement to the galleys.

To conclude, the whole armed force, organized in the different provinces comprehended in the captain-generalship of Carraccas, including the troops of the line, amounts to 13,059; of these 6558 belong to Carraccas and its environs; 2916 to Cumana; 1218 to Maracaybo; 1120 to Guiana; and 1247 to the island of Marguerite. Since 1804, an additional company of troops of the line, amounting to 77 men, have been stationed at Varinas.

CHAP. V.

TRIBUNAL OF THE INQUISITION.—PREROGATIVES OF THE POPE. — BISHOPS. — ECCLESIASTICAL TRIBUNALS. — MISSIONS.--SECULAR PRIESTS.—CONVENTS.--ASYLUMS.

THE Roman Catholic religion in all the Spanish possessions, as in the mother country, is not only dominant but exclusive. Those who are even suspected of being schismatics, lead a very uncomfortable life. Three tribunals of the Inquisition, or holy office, which hold their sittings at Mexico, Lima, and Carthagena, are the inexorable defenders of the faith throughout Spanish America. On their first institution they only took cognizance of matters purely heretical; but their jurisdiction was soon extended to cases of divorce, polygamy, &c.-which have since been successively brought before other tribunals.

The Inquisition has the power to condemn to fine, imprisonment, confiscation, banishment, and to the flames, those individuals who may have offended against its laws; and the secular judges, and even the courts of audience, are bound to respect its decisions, and cause them to be executed.

The principal functions of the holy office consist at present in denouncing books containing propositions that contradict its dogmas, wound decency, or tend to bring the laws and government into discredit. In whatever language a book may be

written, it cannot be circulated till it is first declared orthodox by the commissioners of the Inquisition. Every bookseller is obliged to furnish this court, on the commencement of each year, with a catalogue of the books exposed to sale in his shop; and he is bound to expose to public view a list of those works prohibited by the holy office. Every person on entering the Spanish dominions must transmit an attested list of the books in his possession, either to the Inquisition or its commissaries, to whom belongs the right of permitting their introduction. If any omission or imperfection be detected in this list, the works are confiscated, and the owner compelled to pay two hundred ducats to the holy office. The salaries of the members of this tribunal arise from the fines and confiscations awarded by themselves, and from a canon's place left vacant in each cathedral for the express purpose. When these funds are not sufficient, the deficiency is made up from the royal treasury. Notwithstanding the purity of their religious worship in the Spanish colonies, the fervour of the faithful, and the empire of faith, the Pope has long since ceased to possess any direct influence in their government; they admit his infallibility, the efficacy of his indulgencies, and the validity of his dispensations, &c. but affairs are so conducted that the pontifical is now completely subordinate to the royal authority.

The right of patronage belongs exclusively to the king, in virtue of different bulls, particularly that of Julius II. in 1508; since which period no church, cathedral, monastery, nor even hospital, can be founded without express and direct permission from the king.

The archbishops, bishops, and abbots, are nominated by the Pope, from a list transmitted to him by the king. The canons throughout the Spanish possessions are also appointed by royal authority. The same individual cannot hold a plurality of benefices; and the bishops are obliged to render an account to the king of all the vacant livings in their dioceses, with the exact amount of their salaries; and to point out at the same time those of the different orders they may deem best qualified to fill such stations.

The nomination of curates is likewise vested in the crown; but this right is exercised by its immediate representatives in the different districts where they reside.

The creoles are in general preferred to Europeans for curates, especially if they be acquainted with the Indian language; no priest who is not born either in Spain or in Spanish America, can be appointed to a benefice, unless he has obtained letters of naturalization from the king. Any difficulties which occur with respect to the exercise of the royal patronage, are referred to

the Council of the Indies, which regulates all matters respecting religion in such a manner, that no other power is left to the Pope but that of issuing whatever bulls may be required of him, and of deciding in those cases of conscience which are submitted to his judgment.

Three bishopries are established in the captain-generalship of Carraccas. The first was translated from Coro to Carraccas in 1636. The second was founded in 1777, at Merida, in Maracaybo. The third at St. Thomas, in Guiana, established in 1790, comprehends the immense province of Guiana, the province of Cumana, and the island of Marguerite. The island of Trinidad, ceded to the English by the treaty of Amiens, was likewise included in this bishopric. The revenues of these bishopries are defrayed from the tythes. The king, to whom they belong, draws only two ninths upon the half, and leaves the remainder to the ministers of religion. Of this remainder the bishop receives a fourth. Some years ago this portion allotted to the bishop of Carraccas amounted to seventy thousand piastres. But this revenue, subject to the vicissitudes of the harvests, and the variation in the price of commodities, was reduced, during the last war, to less than forty thousand piastres; and every thing seems to indicate that several years of peace must elapse before it again attain to its former value. The revenue of the bishopric of Merida scarcely amounts to a fourth of that of Carraccas. With respect to the bishopric of Guiana, since its establishment, the king has received the full amount of the tythes, and defrayed the salary, which is fixed at forty thousand piastres, out of the royal treasury. But if we may be permitted to judge from appearances, this will not be much longer permitted; and then the revenue will be between ten and twelve thousand piastres.

Each bishop holds a tribunal or ecclesiastical court, in which all spiritual causes are tried. It is composed of the bishop himself, the fiscal, and provisor. In ordinary cases, sentence is pronounced by the provisor, the bishop only attending when important causes are to be tried, or those which involve the interest of ecclesiastics, &c. An appeal from these sentences may be brought before the metropolitan: if the appellant be successful, the other party have a right to insist on a revisal of the sentence, by the nearest bishop; but this third hearing is definitive, and the judgment is immediately put in execution.

The jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical tribunals extends to all spiritual causes, as well as to questions in any manner connected with the interests of the church, such as orders, benefices, patronage, tythes, marriage, the legitimacy of children, funerals, &c. &c. According to Acevedo, the secular judges have a

right to take cognizance of the royal patronage, even when a question of this kind arises between ecclesiastics. Civil and temporal causes between priests are also brought before the spiritual courts, as well as those disputes which may arise between them and the laity; but at the request of the priest, such cases may be transferred to the secular tribunals.

In the principal town of each bishopric a chapter is established, the members of which are in proportion to the revenues of the diocese. We are next led to notice the curates or village pastors, a class of men so useful when their manners correspond with the important trust committed to their charge. God forbid that I should deny to the Spanish pastors the praise they so justly merit, for the indefatigable zeal with which, day and night, they distribute spiritual aid to their flocks. I confess that I am not intimately acquainted with the particular functions assigned to them, but they all appeared to me to possess the pastoral qualities in a very eminent degree.

The idea of converting the conquest of America into a kind of crusade, strengthened the right which Spain had received from Rome, of adding to her dominions the New World, in order that she might establish in it the Christian religion. It was on this principle, that the famous bull of concession, in 1493, was founded. Nevertheless, as I have already shown, all the principal cities at present comprehended under the captain-generalship of Carraccas were founded and peopled by force of arms; and if we except the two unfortunate missions sent to Cumana at the commencement of the sixteenth century, the gentle voice of persuasion was never heard by the Indian till towards the middle of the seventeenth century. At present the missionaries are scattered among the different villages inhabited by the conquered Indians, where they exercise their sacerdotal and apostolic functions. There is only one established in each village; and the law, which interdicts the residence of any Spaniard among the Indians, is extremely favourable to the domination of the missionary. When a stranger arrives, he is anxious to prevent any intercourse taking place between him and the inhabitants during his stay, which is never prolonged beyond a few hours, on any pretext whatever; by which means it is impossible to discover the terms on which these missionaries live with the inhabitants. If we may judge, however, by the slowness with which the work of conversion goes forward among new tribes, as well as the want of civilization among those who from father to son have been committed to their care, neither religion nor the state gains any great advantage from their labours.

They are prohibited from exacting any compensation from the Indians on account of administering the sacrament, or perform-

ing other ecclesiastical functions. But although this law be not directly violated, its spirit is nevertheless completely eluded, by the sale of rosaries, scapularies, and small images of the Virgin and of the saints. The poor Indian is always menaced with the anger of God until he has purchased every thing the missionary has to dispose of. This species of traffic is repeated so often as to become an object of importance and of speculation. Many of the missionaries do not, besides, scruple to abuse the power which their sacred profession gives them over the minds of the timid and credulous Indian, in order to induce him to labour above his strength, without reaping any benefit from his exertions. A deputation of Indians frequently arrive at Carraccas to complain to the bishop, and the captain-general, of the oppressions exercised by the missionaries; many of whom, notwithstanding every regulation to the contrary, have amassed considerable fortunes, by carrying on an extensive contraband trade.

Spanish America, like the mother country, abounds with priests, though at present they are less numerous than formerly, in proportion to the population. Many circumstances tended to produce this change; a rage for military distinction, the additional tribunals, and consequent multiplication of lawyers of every description; the creation of a number of lucrative situations, from the increased complication of the financial system, have all tended to call off the attention of many from ecclesiastical preferments; yet in all the villages a great number of priests may be found, who live in expectation of obtaining some vacant benefice; as well as others, who, destitute of ambition, remain contented with their paternal fortunes, and the profits arising from masses.

America, discovered at a period when it was believed in Spain that the prosperity of a country depended on the number of its religious establishments, partook of the effects of this opinion, and was quickly covered with churches and convents. But the same causes to which I have attributed the reduction of the secular priests, have likewise tended to lessen the number of monks. There is not, at present, a convent in any of the provinces of Carraccas, that has above half the number of members they had fifty years ago. Notwithstanding the increased population, and greater riches of the country, there has not been a single new convent founded during the last sixty years.

The places of public worship in these provinces are constructed in a modern style, and appear to be very durable; but the riches they contain are not so great as is commonly believed.

It is an opinion which has been sanctioned by the Popes, in all ages, that respect for the church and its ministers would be augmented by rendering the temples of religion superior to the

laws, and inaccessible to the civil magistrate. Hence, among the various immunities granted to the priesthood, none has been defended by it with more zeal, or maintained with greater obstinacy, than that by which the churches are rendered sanctuaries to individuals who violate the laws of their country. Such a privilege is, however, wholly irreconcilable with the public safety, and still more so with the idea entertained of divine justice; for it is altogether repugnant to reason, to suppose that God should incline to protect, in this world, those delinquents whom he consigns to eternal punishment in the next. The numberless abuses flowing from this source at last induced the king of Spain to apply to his holiness to reduce the number of these sanctuaries; in consequence of which, a bull was issued in 1772, which commanded that in future only one church in each village, and two in every large city, should possess this privilege. In the following year, this bull was ordered to be put in execution by the king.

CHAP. VI.

COMMERCIAL SYSTEM OF SPAIN WITH HER COLONIES.—COMMERCE OF THE EASTERN PART OF TERRA FIRMA.—TRADE FIRST ESTABLISHED BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND THE MOTHER COUNTRY.—CONTRABAND TRADE WITH THE DUTCH.—TRADE WITH FOREIGN COLONIES.—CONTRABAND TRADE WITH JAMAICA, CURACOA, TRINIDAD, &c. &c.

THE Spaniards continued long after the discovery of America to estimate its value merely by the quantity of the precious metals which might be drawn from it. Hence it was, that Mexico and Peru so much engaged their attention from the first moment of their conquest, that all their other possessions were regarded with perfect indifference; and the mines they contained appeared so valuable, as to absorb every other consideration. The first commercial relations legally established between the province of Venezuela and the mother country, appears to have originated with the colonists themselves. In 1560, a deputy, named Sancho Brizeno, was sent to Spain by this colony, to demand, among other things, permission from the king that *one vessel* should be annually freighted from the mother country, for the port of Borburata, the cargo of which should only be subject to one half of the enormous duties imposed on the commerce with America. This petition was granted in December of the same year; and the vessel con-

tinued to proceed annually to the place of its destination, till that port was abandoned for Goayre.

During the whole of the sixteenth century, the province of Venezuela produced no commodities which were useful in a commercial point of view. The minds of the first settlers, always bent on the discovery of mines, though continually disappointed, despised the pursuits of agriculture, and the cultivation of the useful arts. It was not till after the conclusion of the war of 1634, when the Dutch took possession of the island of Curaçoa, where they established a considerable depôt of merchandise, that the inhabitants of Terra Firma, encouraged by the example of their new and industrious neighbours, thought seriously of drawing from the fertility of the soil, those productions which the Dutch received in exchange for their commodities. They particularly turned their attention to the cultivation of cocoa, which, with leather, formed a long time an object of a successful and increasing commerce.

This connection was scarcely known in Spain, before permission was obtained from the king to freight two ships for Venezuela; but the same commodities were furnished so much lower by the Dutch, that they were obliged to dispose of their cargoes at a loss of sixty per cent. and could with much difficulty obtain others in return. In a short time after this, the Spanish government began to discover the real value of this part of South America, and they beheld with vexation its intimate connection with strangers. No other means of putting a stop to this intercourse occurred to the Spanish ministry, but that of establishing such an active superintendence, as would in future prevent all illegal intercourse with the Dutch. In the prosecution of this design, many families were completely ruined, by fines, penalties, and confiscations, while the evil they were intended to remedy remained the same.

In 1728 some Biscayan merchants proposed to the king to prevent this contraband trade at their own expence, provided they were allowed to carry on an exclusive trade between Venezuela and the mother country. After experiencing some difficulties on the part of government, they were at last permitted to fit out, annually, for that province, two ships of forty or fifty guns each, freighted with Spanish productions, which, after having landed at port Goayre, they were to proceed from the mouth of the Oroonoko as far as Rio-de-la-Hache, in order to take possession of all the vessels engaged in that contraband traffic.

To this effect, his Spanish majesty granted them the necessary patents, constituting them a company, under the title of the Guipuscoa company. In 1734 this company obtained an exten-

sion of the original grant, so far as to enable them to take in cargoes at Saint Sebastian, &c. on paying to the king the same duties as if they had cleared out from Cadiz; but on their return they were obliged to put in at this last port, in order to pay the duties imposed on the colonial productions. From 1730 to 1748 this company exported directly to Spain 858,978 quintals of cocoa, which was a third more than had been sent during the thirty preceding years; besides, the cocoa sent in 1732 was sold at forty-five piastres in place of eighty, which was formerly its price. During the existence of the Guipuscoa company, the province of Venezuela became extremely flourishing, and a vast number of new villages were built. This company freighted annually for Terra-Firma six ships, of at least three hundred tons burden: before its establishment the only article of commerce was cocoa; but in a short time they drew, for the exportation of leather and tobacco, no less a sum than 200,000 piastres.

From 1735 to 1763 the culture of cocoa became prodigiously increased. At the first period they did not raise in the whole province above 65,000 quintals; but in 1763 they exported directly,

To Spain, ...	50,319 quintals.
Vera-Cruz, ...	16,864
The Canaries, ...	11,160
Saint Domingo, Porto-Rico, and the Havannah, . .	2,316
Local consumption, . . .	30,000
Total	110,659

During the same period, the plains south of Carraccas, which are well calculated for the rearing of cattle, were greatly increased in value. The duties drawn from this source, which were formerly inadequate to meet the expences of government, were henceforth fully sufficient for this purpose; by which means the king was relieved from sending from Mexico, as he had done for the two preceding centuries, money to pay the judges and the military established in Venezuela and Cumana. In short, the province of Venezuela became more flourishing, and assumed an air of greater prosperity, than any other of the Spanish possessions in South America. Things continued in this promising condition for some time, when, either by the unwise and monopolizing conduct of the company themselves, or by an unfounded jealousy on the part of the Spanish government, it was virtually dissolved, by a regulation entitled *the act of free commerce*, executed 12th October, 1778; by which the ports of South America were, without distinction, laid open to a free

trade with the mother country. In order to engage in this trade, it was, however, necessary either to be a Spaniard by birth or naturalization. No foreigner was permitted to a share in its benefits, even when married to a native, or acting as the agent of his children or father-in-law. The laws in this respect were particularly strict: nevertheless, from the indolence and pride of the Spanish nation, the commerce with South America is mostly in the hands of foreigners, established at Cadiz, who readily find the means of carrying on their speculations in the name of a Spaniard, who receives a small gratituity on this account. This fraud, if it deserves the name, is extremely advantageous to the Spanish nation, since it imparts to the commerce of the mother country, an activity which it could never have attained had it been exclusively confined to native Spaniards.

In 1796 the exports from the different ports of Spain to Terra-Firma, amounted in value to the sum of 3,118,811½ piastres; but from 1797 to the peace of Amiens their commerce was nearly annihilated, and even at present has not recovered its former prosperity.

In none of the cities of Terra-Firma, not even in Carraccas, have the merchants any point of union, where they can talk over public affairs, or those mercantile transactions in which they are interested. They have no paper money in circulation, and are wholly unacquainted with the utility of banks. All bargains are made directly and privately between the parties: there is no such thing as a current price. These cities are, in fact, rather factories, than places of commerce.

The trade carried on between the provinces of Carraccas and the other Spanish possessions, is extremely trifling. From Barcelona they export to the Havannah, or the island of Cuba, salted and dried provisions, which are termed *tosino*. They are prepared at Barcelona, where they cost little more than twenty-five francs the quintal, and are sold at the Havannah for sixty or seventy francs. They receive in exchange wax, sugar, and silver. From Maracaybo they send cocoa, &c.; from Coro, hides and cheese; from Porto-Cavallo, mules, when they do not expect to receive a greater price for them in Jamaica; from Goayre, cocoa, sarsaparilla, &c. Neither Cumana, Marguerite, nor Guiana, have any commercial relations with the island of Cuba.

At one period a very profitable traffic was carried on from the port of Goayre to Vera-Cruz; but for several years this trade has been relinquished.

It is estimated, that the quantity of money circulated in the provinces of the Carraccas does not exceed 3,000,000 of

piastres; a fourth of which is small money, that is termed *macouquina*.

Although Spain continues inexorable with respect to the admission of foreign flags into the ports of South America, it nevertheless permits the colonists to carry on a very extensive trade in vessels of their own: the only article they are prohibited from sending to the colonies belonging to other powers, is cocoa. At first sight, it should seem that such a latitude of exportation would be favourable to the progress of agriculture in the Spanish possessions; and this must doubtless have been the intention of the legislature: but the event has not fully justified their expectation, since, during 1796, the value of the commodities of this kind exported to foreign colonies did not exceed 150,000 piastres. But mules, black cattle, and leather, produced a considerable sum, as they are articles much wanted in some of the other colonies, while they are produced in great abundance in Terra-Firma.

During the last war, the sea was covered with English cruisers; so that not a single Spanish ship could leave their ports without the certainty of being captured. The provinces of Carraccas were by this means absolutely deprived of an outlet for their commodities; since the same cause which interrupted the communication with the mother country, rendered the intercourse equally dangerous with the few colonies which still continued on either friendly or neutral terms with Spain. Notwithstanding the extreme rigour of the prohibitive laws, the urgency of the case induced the king to yield to the representations made to him on this subject; and for the first time since the conquest of the New World, the South American ports were opened to neutral vessels, by an order dated the 18th November, 1797. The incessant complaints of the Spanish merchants against this wise measure, induced, however, the king, in 1800, to revoke the order of 1797, as well as every other special permission to the same effect, granted either by his majesty himself, or by the viceroys or intendants of America. The courier charged with this unfortunate decree arrived at Goayre, and published it on the following April; but in his passage from Cote-Ferme to the island of Cuba, he was taken prisoner by the English; and by this fortunate accident, the foreign commerce was not interrupted with that island. The prosperity resulting from its continuance frequently made the inhabitants of Terra-Firma regret that he had not been captured immediately on leaving Spain.

The assurance given to the Spanish merchants by the government, that they should be reinstated in their right to an exclusive trade with South America, produced no other effect but

that of inducing them to engage in speculations which ultimately enriched the enemy; as of ten vessels sent from Spain they could not reckon on the return of more than one. Even the packets did not escape the vigilance of the English ships; during the whole of the year 1801, not one of them reached the Havannah, where they ought to arrive regularly every month.

Strange as it may appear, at this period, and indeed in the whole course of the war, the Spanish Americans had not only liberty to frequent the English ports, but were actually furnished with passports by the British admirals. These passports served only for one voyage, but could readily be renewed on the payment of eighteen piastres: their price, however, augmented in proportion to the demand. There were frequently in the road of Kingston, at one time no less than eighty ships, all under Spanish colours; in the harbour of Curaçoa, sixty, and in that of Trinidad more than forty. This commerce occupied, altogether, above four hundred vessels, which were fitted out under pretence of being sent to French or neutral colonies; and on their return they presented French papers, evidently fabricated for the purpose, but which were nevertheless allowed to pass without any investigation.

In this trade Porto-Cavallo alone had a hundred vessels engaged, in which, according to the custom-house registers, they exported to the enemy's ports, during 1801, indigo, cotton, cocoa, hides, coffee, copper, horses, mules, and other articles, to the value of 954,645 piastres. This system of indulgence was likewise extended by the custom-house officers to a great part of the cargoes, which were shipped without paying the usual duties.

We must here observe, that these statements are far from conveying an accurate idea of the extent of this clandestine commerce, since they do not include the silver which accompanied these commodoties, nor the amount of the credit obtained by the Spanish merchant: the importation of dry merchandise exceeded more than one half the value of the exported commodities.

The merchant, the agriculturist, the public officers, and even the citizens, embarked their capitals in such expeditions, with the same security as if the most profound peace had prevailed between Spain and England; and the former government either felt itself too weak to punish such a criminal abuse, or tolerated it in order to avoid greater evils.

Saint Domingo, during its prosperity, was the entrepôt of the merchandise from the Havannah, Vera-Cruz, Guatimala, Carthagena, and Venezuela; scarce a week elapsed, without four or five small ships arriving at the Cape or Port-au-Prince, with

twenty or twenty-five thousand piastres, for the purpose of purchasing European merchandise. Since the disastrous events at Saint Domingo, however, Jamaica has become the general magazine of the Spaniards from the gulph of Mexico; and it must be admitted, in praise of the English merchants and their government, that they employ measures, in order to encourage this lucrative branch of commerce, which the French never thought of. They trusted to, the good quality and cheapness of their commodities, waited patiently the arrival of the Spaniards, sold only for ready money, and left to them all the risk of introducing the articles so purchased into their country. The English, on the contrary, give them large credit, and either carry the merchandise in ships of their own, or convoy those of the Spaniards. This last manœuvre has been chiefly put in practice since the peace of 1801: corsairs having been stationed on the coast to suppress the smuggling trade, the British fitted out armed vessels, which afforded such effectual protection to this species of commerce, that in 1803 not a single Spanish ship durst venture to interfere, but all remained quietly in port.

Coro, Porto-Cavallo, and Goayre are the ports from whence vessels are freighted for Curaçoa; their cargoes, chiefly composed of hides, indigo, coffee, and sugar, are rarely of sufficient value to purchase the articles wanted in return; hence large sums of money are likewise sent for this purpose. It is seldom that the cargoes of the Spanish ships trading to Curaçoa produce more than 6000 piastres each, or that those in return are of less value than 10,000.

Trinidad, which was ceded to the English at the peace of Amiens, situated at the eastern extremity of Terra-Firma, from which it is only four leagues distant, is extremely convenient for the contraband trade with Cumana, Barcelona, Marguerite, and Guiana. The gulph of Paria, which washes the eastern part of Trinidad, receives the waters of the river Guarapiche, which enters the province of Cumana, and by which animals are transported from Terra-Firma to Trinidad. The articles received in return, arrive by the same channel, or are landed at different points in their course, without the smallest danger. It is there that the cargoes enter which are destined for Barcelona, from which place they are separated, and sent to Carraccas and other cities. The mouths of the Oroonoko, which cross the gulph of Paria from South to North, and which the island of Trinidad forces to discharge themsleves into the sea through the mouths of the Dragon, open to this island the commerce of Guiana, from whence the surplus is conveyed, by the river Apure, to Barquisimeto, Truxillo, Varinas, Merida, &c. The Dutch at Surinam, had, during a long period of time, engrossed the contraband

trade with Spanish Guiana; but they have been wholly deprived of this advantage by the British since they obtained possession of Trinidad.

I should ill fulfil this part of my task, did I not give a view of the European merchandise most esteemed in the different provinces which form the subject of the present work. The cargoes which are shipped from the mother country, for Terra Firma, do not contain above one third of national commodities the remaining parts are made up from the manufactures of foreign nations trading with Spain.

Generally speaking, the Spanish Americans have a dislike to cotton cloth; they adopted its use during the last war on account of the low price at which it could be purchased from the British colonies. A piece of wrought muslin, which would before have cost thirty-five or forty piastres, were sold by them for twelve or fourteen; but in proportion as this article became scarce in consequence of the increased demand, it rose somewhat in price; on which the Spaniards reverted to the use of linen. The demand for luxuries of different kinds is not the same in every province: for although a taste for show and expence be equally great in them all, they possess not the same means of gratifying it. Thus, for example, diamonds, jewels, and very fine cloths, sell better, and in greater quantity, at Mexico, Peru, and the Havannah, than elsewhere. In Terra-Firma, on the contrary, the demand for false diamonds is much greater, in proportion, than for true. Lace is very much worn by the Spaniards; that of Flanders is preferred. In a commercial point of view, the demand for it is not however great, since the use of it is confined to the principal inhabitants, and it is never worn but on days of ceremony.

Black stuffs are in great reputation among the Spanish Americans, principally serges, prunellos, satins, and taffeties. The mantles of the priests, and the habits of the nuns, are always made of one or other of these fabrics.

For the last ten years the use of broad cloth has become extremely common in Carraccas and its dependencies. Very few of the white inhabitants but now either dress in blue kerseymere, or in Elbeuf, or Abbeville cloth. The French hats are preferred in Carraccas to those of any other country. The Spanish youths have recently acquired a great taste for boots, with which they are supplied, exclusively, by the English.

The retail trade is mostly in the hands of the Canarians. The average profit on the different commodities is from twenty-five to thirty per cent.; but as a great many individuals, engage in this species of traffic, the profits arising from it become so divided, that each finds it difficult to educate his family with decency.

There is also in Terra-Firma another species of traders, who keep shops known under the name of *bodegas*, and elsewhere by that of *pulperias*. The goods they expose to sale consist chiefly of pottery, small glass ware, dried fruit, cheese, tafia, wines, sugar, hams, &c. &c. They possess the advantage over other shops of not being obliged to shut up during Sundays, and holydays, and are usually kept open from day-break until nine in the evening. Cent. per cent. is the usual profit in this traffic, but on some articles the gain is double and even triple. It is in this trifling retail trade, which is mostly carried on by unmarried Catalonians, and Canarians, that the foundation of great fortunes are more frequently laid, than in any other line of business whatever.

Until a very recent period, commercial disputes were brought before the ordinary tribunals; and consequently subjected to the same formalities, delays, and expence as other causes. The governor of Carraccas, D. Estevan de Leon suggested to the inhabitants the propriety of applying to the king for the establishment of a consulate; and he supported the application with all the weight of his influence and talents. In consequence of this representation, founded upon public interest and the prosperity of commerce, a royal schedule was obtained in June 1793; which established at Carraccas a commercial tribunal, composed of the governor, who is always president, a prior and two consuls, nine assistants and a syndic, with their deputies; besides an assessor, secretary, and register-keeper: two porters are attached to the establishment, who must be whites.

All the members, except the five last, only remain in office two years. Half of this number is removed every year, and their successors are chosen by a very extended mode of election. The nobles, chevaliers of military orders, merchants, agriculturists, and, in one word, all the white population, except ecclesiastics, are elegible to these offices.

The funds appropriated to defray the salaries of the members, and the other expences of this establishment, are raised partly from fines imposed by the judges or their deputies, and partly from an average duty of one per cent. on every article of exportation and importation to and from Europe, and other parts of Spanish America, and three per cent. on those exported or imported to and from foreign colonies, except mules and horses, that pay a piastre per head; black cattle pay one per cent.; while negroes, and gold and silver coin, are wholly exempted from this duty. The island of Marguerite enjoys an exemption from this contribution.

The principal object of the institution in question, is, the ad-

ministration of justice in commercial affairs, and the adoption of those measures best calculated to promote the improvement of agriculture, and the extension of commerce. The form of procedure in this tribunal, is simple, expeditious, and free from expence. They hold their sittings on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday of each week. They attend to the complaint, and cite the defender to appear. After listening to the allegations on both sides, examining witnesses, and written documents, they endeavour to bring about an amicable adjustment: if they fail in this, the parties are ordered to leave the court, after which sentence is pronounced, and being signed by the judges and register-keeper, is immediately notified to the parties. If the case, however, be too complicated to admit of verbal explanation, permission is granted, at the request of one of the parties, to state the circumstances in writing; but in this case the party making the demand is obliged to swear that he has not been assisted by an advocate.

When the sum in dispute exceeds 800 piastres, an appeal lies to a tribunal termed *alzadas*, composed of the governor and two judges nominated by him.

The jurisdiction of the consulate is co-extensive with the limits of the captain-generalship of Carraccas; but for the greater convenience of the citizens, deputies are established in the ports of Maracaybo, Coro, Porto-Cavallo, Cumana, Guiana, and the island of Marguerite. The judgments of these deputies may, like those of the consulate, be brought by appeal before the tribunal of *alzadas;* with this difference, that the sum of 800 piastres, respecting which the decision of the consulate is definitive, is reduced to 200 piastres before the deputies in Cumana, Porto-Cavallo, and Maracaybo; 100 in Guiana, Varinas, and Coro; and 50 in the island of Marguerite and other places. By the schedule of 1795, an appeal is permitted from the deputies and ordinary judges to the consulate. In case the sentence be confirmed, it then becomes definitive; but when it is reversed or modified, a final right of appeal lies before the tribunal of *alzadas*.

Besides acting as a court of justice, the consulate holds an assembly twice every month, at which the governor presides; and which is composed of the prior, the two consuls, the assistants, and the syndic; with their respective deputies, the secretary, paymaster, and treasurer. All that relates, says the schedule of creation, to the progress of agriculture, and prosperity of commerce, ought to be discussed in the assembly of the consulate, to which the deputies and every description of citizens should contribute their observations. The king expressly enjoins this assembly to render an account to the government of every thing which shall appear to be worthy of royal attention; and at the same time to propose those measures which may, in their opinion, seem proper for the encou-

ragement of the agriculture, the industry, and the commerce of the country.

After considerable difficulty, I was at length permitted to examine the labours of this assembly in favour of agriculture. I found the only step they had taken towards the fulfilment of this important duty, was having, in 1797, invited some enlightened cultivators to furnish memoirs respecting the mode of culture employed by each of them; which had for four years remained in the hands of the commissioners appointed to examine them and give in a general report, which has never yet been done, or any means taken to enforce compliance with the order of the assembly to that effect. Desirous to see these memoirs, I found them covered with dust in the house of Count de la Grange, one of the commissioners, who readily permitted me to peruse them; after which I returned them to their former situation, and may venture to affirm that ages will elapse before they are again disturbed.

The only useful work that has engaged the attention of the consular assembly since its creation, is the formation of a road, which is not yet quite finished, between Porto-Cavallo and Valence, by a shorter and less mountainous tract than the former. Another road has also been opened, under their auspices, from Goayre to Carraccas, by the foot of the mountain which separates these two cities; it is longer than the one now in use, but much more commodious. The roads from Caricagoa, and the communication of Carraccas with the vallies of Aragoa, have also attracted the notice of the assembly, and much money has been expended upon them without any proportional advantages.

Fully aware of the drawbacks occasioned to trade by the last unexampled war, I do not accuse the consular assembly of Carraccas with having directly occasioned that lamentable decay in the commerce of these provinces, which has been experienced for some time past; but neither can I praise it for the wisdom of its measures, or for activity and zeal in carrying into effect the ends of its institution.

CHAP. VII.

GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA.—DESCRIPTION OF CARRACCAS.—GOAYRE.—PORTO-CAVALLO.—VALENCE.—MARACAY.—TULMERO.—VICTORIA.—CORO.—BARQUISIMETO.—TOCUYO.—GOANARE, &c. &c.—GOVERNMENT OF CUMANA.—DESCRIPTION OF CUMANA.—CARIACO.—BARCELONA.—ISLAND OF MARGUERITE, &c.—GOVERNMENT OF MARACAYBO.—DESCRIPTION OF MARACAYBO. MERIDA, &c.—GOVERNMENT OF VARINAS.—DESCRIPTION OF VARINAS.—SAINT JAMES, &c. &c.

IT appears to me that I should fail in satisfying the curiosity of the reader respecting provinces which are equally unknown to the polite world as the most distant parts of China, if I did not add to the general descriptions given in the preceding chapters, some details respecting the political institutions and manners of the inhabitants of this interesting country.

The city of Carraccas, situated in 10° 31′ north latitude, and 69° 3′ east longitude, reckoning from the meridian of Paris, was founded in 1567 by Diego Losada. It is not only the capital of the province of Venezuela, but of the vast extent of country occupied by the governments of Maracaybo, Varinas, Guiana, Cumana, and the island of Marguerite. Its temperature does not correspond with its latitude; for in place of the insupportable heats which might be expected to prevail in the proximity of the equator, it enjoys, on the contrary, a mild and almost uninterrupted spring, which it owes to its elevation, being four hundred and sixty toises above the level of the sea.

In this city Farenheit's thermometer in winter marks usually,

At six in the morning, ...	58
At two in the afternoon, . . .	73
At ten at night, ...	68
Maximum, ...	76
Minimum, ...	52

In Summer,

At six in the morning, ...	72
At two in the afternoon, ...	79
At ten at night, ...	75

Maximum, ... 85
Minimum, ... 69
Humidity, according to the hygrometer of Deluc, usually, ... 47
Maximum, ... 58
Minimum, ... 37

The mercury, which rises in the southern parts of Europe, and during the variations of the atmosphere, even to eleven lines of a Paris inch, never ascends in the eastern parts of Terra-Firma above two lines.

There are observed at Carraccas, in every season of the year, four atmospheric tides in the twenty-four hours; two during the day, and two in the night.

Blue portion of the sky, according to the cyanometer of Saussure, usually, 18.

In a hundred parts of the atmosphere are contained twenty-eight of oxygen, and seventy-two of nitrogen.

The maximum of the first is, ... 29
The minimum, ... $27\frac{1}{2}$

Magnetic declination 27th of September, 1799, 4° 38′ 45″.

Inclination of the pole, usually, . . - $43\frac{53}{100}$.

Oscillations of the pendulum in fifteen minutes, 1270.

The city of Carraccas, which covers a space of two square miles, is built in a valley four leagues in extent, running in a direction from east to west, between the great chain of mountains which skirt the sea from Coro to Cumana: it is also bounded on the north and south by mountains of an equal height. The ground on which it stands is broken and irregular, so that in walking the streets it is necessary continually to ascend and descend; but the greatest declivity is from north to south. From the port of Pastora towards the north, to the river Goayre, which limits this city to the south, the distance is seventy-five toises. Carraccas is watered by four rivers; the first, Goayre, flows along its southern extremity without entering it.

The second, Anauco, bathes the eastern part of the city. Candelaria is the point where it most nearly approaches it, and at this spot a bridge has been erected, which greatly facilitates the communication with the valley of Chacao.

The third, Caroata, flows over the rocks in a bed formed by high and steep banks. In its course, which is from north to south, it separates from the other, that quarter of the city named St. John: they are, however, united by means of a bridge very well constructed, but not so regular as that of Candelaria.

The fourth, Catucho, supplies with water the public and private cisterns erected in different parts of the city.

These four rivers unite in a single bed, cross the valley of

Chacao, covered with fruits, live stock, and articles of commerce; and at last mingle their waters with the Tuy, which flows into the sea twelve leagues east of cape Codera.

The streets of Carraccas run at right angles with each other; they are about twenty feet wide, paved, open to the four cardinal points, and at the distance of nearly three hundred feet from one another. There are only three public squares which deserve that name, though even they are not free from faults. The largest, called *placa mayor*, is disfigured by small shops built in it from east to west, which are let out to the merchants of the city; and for the miserable pittance received on this account, the eye is deprived of a view for which nothing can compensate. This square occupies three hundred square feet. It is well paved, and is employed as a market for all kinds of provisions; vegetables, fruits, butchers' meat, fish, poultry, game, bread, parrots, apes, and birds of every species are here exposed to sale in the greatest abundance. The cathedral church in the east side of the square, is disproportioned to the rest of the buildings. This square has two entrances on each side. The second square, Candelaria, is surrounded by an iron railing upon masonry of unequal height. Being built on an argillaceous soil mixed with sand, it is much better than the best pavement, and all together presents an agreeable appearance. The only edifice worth notice is the church of Candelaria, which, though not constructed with geometrical accuracy, is ornamented by a façade of sufficient beauty to divert the eye from dwelling on the defective parts of the square.

The third is that of Saint Paul, which is a regular square, ornamented by a fountain in the middle. The church of Saint Paul is situated at the south-east angle of the square, with the other buildings in which it has not the smallest agreement. This square is neither levelled nor paved.

The other squares, five in number, do not deserve particular notice. In that of Saint John, which is pretty extensive, the horse militia are exercised.

Many houses belonging to individuals are handsome and well built; some of them are of brick, but the greatest part are built of stone, nearly in the manner of the Romans; those of the principal inhabitants are elegantly furnished. There is generally in each house one principal apartment, which is ornamented in the richest and most expensive manner, and which is never employed by the family, but only opened for the reception of company on days of ceremony.

In the city of Carraccas there are no public edifices but those dedicated to religious purposes. The captain-general, the royal audience, the intendant, and all the other tribunals, hold their sittings in houses hired for the purpose. Even the military hos-

pital is in a private house. The *contadorie*, or treasury, is the only royal building; and its appearance does no honour to the taste or munificence of the king.

On an eminence above the city stand the barracks, which consist of nine edifices of equal height, and a double court. They might conveniently lodge two thousand men, but are only occupied by a single troop of the line. The barrack for the militia, that is, the house employed as such, stands in the opposite quarter of the city.

It is to be regretted, that the ground had not been levelled for the extent of three or four hundred feet round these barracks, and surrounded by a wall two feet in height, surmounted by an iron railing, which would have afforded an agreeable walk to the inhabitants, a convenient place for the troops to exercise in, and could not have been attended with much additional expence.

Carraccas is the seat of the archbishop of Venezuela, whose diocese is bounded by the sea to the north, from the river Unare to the jurisdiction of Coro; to the east by the province of Cumana, to the south by the Oronooko, and to the west by the bishopric of Merida. The cathedral church only merits notice from the rank it holds in the *hierarchy of temples*. It is truly astonishing that in a city so well peopled as Carraccas, and where Christianity is so much respected, there should not be erected a church more consonant to the importance of the archbishopric and the grandeur of the city. It is not sufficient that the interior be adorned with golden tapestry, that the sacerdotal habits and sacred vessels announce the supremacy of the temple to which they belong; while its construction, its architecture, its dimensions, and distribution, have nothing grand, striking, or regular.

It is about two hundred and fifty feet in length, and seventy-five in width. It is low, and supported within by twenty-four pillars, distributed in four ranges lengthwise. The two center ranges form the nave, twenty feet wide, and the two others divide the under sides at the distance of twelve feet and a half each; so that the nave alone is of greater width than the two lower sides, which lie to the right and left. The grand altar, instead of being in the center, is fixed against the wall. The choir occupies one half of the nave; and the arrangement of this temple is such, that not above four hundred persons can obtain a view of the priest officiating at the altar. The exterior of this building owes nothing either to the taste or execution of the workmen. The steeple without having received any embellishment from art, possesses at least the merit of solidity. The only clock in Carraccas is fixed in this steeple; it strikes the quarters, and is on the whole extremely accurate.

Besides the cathedral, there are four parishes in Carraccas,

Saint Rosalie, Saint Paul, Candelaria or Chandeleur, and Alta-Gracia; three monasteries, the Franciscans or Cordeliers, the Dominicans, and the Mercenaires; a chapel; an hospital of Capuchins; two convents of nuns, one of the order of Carmelites, and the other of the Conception; a house of *Educandas*, or of female education; three churches, Saint Maurice, Trinity, Divina Pastora, termed by the Spaniards *Ermites*, because they belong not to any parish, convent, or hospital. These churches are always erected at the expence of the faithful; each of them has a priest, who regulates and dispenses the ceremonies, and collects the alms.

In general the churches in Carraccas are well built; but the one which surpasses all the rest, is the parish church of Alta-Gracia, the architecture of which would do honour to the first cities in Europe. It was erected by the free men of colour inhabiting that quarter of the city where it stands, and ornamented at their expence, and by some contributions from the whites. That of Candelaria owes its existence in like manner to the Canarians.

All the churches are gilded from the base of the altars to the ceilings. The authors, who, like Robertson, have boasted so much of their riches, have not surely taken up this idea from those of Carraccas, unless they have mistaken these gildings for pure gold. The churches possess every thing necessary for the decent celebration of religious worship, but they are neither sumptuous nor in great profusion. The linen, beads, tapestry, the habits of the Virgin and of the saints, when they are carried in procession, or exposed during their particular feasts, are certainly objects of considerable expence, but cannot be considered as a source of riches. It is gold, silver, and diamonds alone which possess any intrinsic value; and these are not found in great profusion in the churches of Carraccas. We may judge of this by the priests of other churches being obliged to borrow the large silver chandeliers and other ornaments from the cathedral, when they celebrate any of their grand festivals.

The Spaniards are very assiduous in their attendance on divine ordinances; that is, on mass, sermons, and processions; for they do not reckon vespers among the exercises of religion, as is done both in France and Spain.

The men usually attend church in their common dress: it is, however, necessary that they either wear a proper habit, or be covered with a cloak or great-coat; neither rank nor colour exempts the individual from this regulation.

Females, when attending church, especially the whites, are rigorously restricted to wear black. Their dress consists of a black petticoat and veil. The slaves only are permitted to appear in

white veils. The gauze veils worn by females of the higher ranks are so thin as to afford a perfect view of their features. The rest of their dress is usually made either of silk, or velvet trimmed with beautiful blond lace, and costs from 400 to 800 piastres. Those who blush to appear poor by wearing less expensive clothes, subject themselves to every kind of privation, in order to rival their more opulent neighbours; while others, despising such rigid economy, sacrifice their honour to their vanity, and obtain rich apparel as the price of their charms.

Several females, who in order to avert a threatened evil, or obtain an anxiously desired good, make vows to assist for a determined length of time at certain religious ceremonies, and appear in a habit emblematical of the power they have invoked to their aid. Thus, when their prayers are addressed to our lady of Monut-Carmel, they adopt a violet-coloured habit, with a medallion on the left side; if to Saint Francis, they wear the habit of his order, which in Spanish America is blue, &c. &c.

Those who cannot afford to procure such characteristic garments, are obliged, under similar vows, to attend the celebration of mass before daybreak, which they term *missas de madrugada*. The reason assigned for this practice is, that without an appropriate dress it would be indecent to enter the churches during daylight.

The festivals kept by the Spaniards, are those found in the Roman calendar. They are so numerous at Carraccas, that scarcely a single day elapses without the occurrence of some saint's day in one or other of the churches. What infinitely multiplies these ceremonies, is, that each festival is preceded by nine days consecrated to prayer, and followed by eight; during which the faithful, not only of the parish where such festival is kept, but from every part of the city, join to their prayers public amusements, as fire-works, music, balls, &c.

The procession of the saint forms the most brilliant part of these festivals. The image of the saint, which is always as large as life and richly dressed, is carried about at noon upon a small table highly decorated, and followed or preceded by some other saint belonging to the same church, but less sumptuously habited. Many banners and crosses are carried before the procession; the men walk two abreast, and the principal part of them carry a taper in their hand; then follow the musicians, the clergy, the civil authorities, and lastly the women, surrounded by a guard with fixed bayonets. The retinue is always very numerous. All the windows in the streets through which the procession passes, are ornamented with flags, which give an air of gaiety and festivity to that quarter of the city; they are also

crouded with females, who repair hither to witness this amusing and agreeable exhibition.

The devotion of the Spaniards is almost exclusively paid to the Blessed Virgin. They have an image of her in all their churches, under different denominations, and each of them has been brought into notice in a manner more or less miraculous, particularly two, the history of whose inauguration is so remarkable as to deserve being recorded.

The first is our Lady of Copa Cobana. An Indian, says the tradition, walking along the streets of Carraccas, pulled off his hat, on which he observed a demi-real; much astonished, he ran with it to the first cabaret, and purchased some ardent spirits. Afterwards going to seat himself at the corner of the street, he had occasion to again pull off his hat, when another piece of the same value fell at his feet; more astonished than before, he also bartered it for his favourite potion. A moment afterwards, pulling off his hat for the third time, another demi-real tumbled on the ground. On picking it up, and examining it with care, he observed the figure of a virgin impressed on it. He instantly consigned this precious relic to the scapulary he wore around his neck, underneath his shirt. A short time afterwards, having assassinated a man, he was taken, imprisoned, and condemned to be executed. On the executioner putting the cord round his neck, it instantly broke; a stronger cord was substituted in its stead, which shared the fate of the former; on which the Indian declared, that this miracle was produced by our Lady of Copa Cobana. He requested they would examine his scapulary, when, in fact, they actually discovered the demi-real, which had become as large as a piastre; and the figure of the virgin was sad and covered with perspiration.

The Indian requested that it might be deposited in the church of St. Paul, and that prayers might be put up to the virgin, in order to obtain the favour of Heaven. This request was granted, and the Indian suffered the execution of his sentence. The cabildo or municipality of Carraccas decreed, that all prayers for rain should be offered up to this virgin. In fact, whenever they suffer from long continued drought, they proceed in procession to St. Paul's, in order to seek our Lady of Copa Cobana, and carry her to the cathedral, where she remains two days, which are kept as festivals. They afterwards return to St. Paul's with the same solemnity. The archbishops, the chapter, the priests, curés, and monks of all the different convents, the captain-general, the royal audience, and the cabildo assist at these two processions.

The second virgin established at Carraccas by a miracle, is our Lady of the Soledad. A rich female of Carraccas, possessing goods

upon the coast between Porto-Cavello and Goayre, had ordered from Spain an image of our Lady of Soledad, which they adored at Madrid, in a chapel dedicated to her service. Walking one day on the shore, she beheld upon the sand a large case directed to herself. Astonished at this circumstance, she caused it to be carried to her dwelling. On opening the case, a fine statue of our Lady of Soledad struck the eyes of the assistants. They prostrated themselves, exclaiming, "a miracle!" and henceforward their vows and prayers were all addressed to this virgin. A short time after, the vessel arrived in the port of Goayre, on board of which the statue of the virgin from Madrid had been shipped. The captain waited on the lady, delivered her a letter, and bathed in tears, acknowledged, that having experienced a terrible storm at sea, he was obliged to throw every thing overboard, in order to lighten the vessel; and that the case containing the virgin had shared a similar fate. On comparing dates, it was discovered, that the virgin had been found on the shore on the very day the storm occurred at sea. The cry of a miracle was set up anew. The news of this event was quickly diffused abroad, and the reputation of our Lady of Soledad established on an unmovable foundation. It was left by the lady at her death to the convent of Franciscans, where it is invoked by a numerous tribe of votaries.

The only public amusements at Carraccas, is the exhibition of comedies during the festivals. Admittance to them costs only a single real; which affords a sufficient indication of the ability of the actors, and the elegance of the theatre. The pieces are ill written, and still worse performed. The declamation of this stage resembles the tone in which a child six years old recites a lesson he does not perfectly remember. They possess neither grace, action, inflexion of voice, easy gesture, nor, in one word, any quality which constitutes an actor in an ordinary theatre. The comedians of Carraccas may be compared to those itinerant players who frequent fairs, living rather on what is produced by the pity, than the approbation of their audience.

From the above picture, every person must be inclined to suppose that similar exhibitions would be wholly deserted, or at most only attended by those possessing neither taste nor education. This, however, is far from being the case; the rich and the poor, the old and the young, nobles and plebeians, governors and governed, all assiduously frequent this species of amusement. The only problem I have not been able to resolve among all my observations on Carraccas, is the indifference of the inhabitants of this city, who are in other respects not destitute of taste, and have received much instruction, respecting a point so essential to public amusement.

When speaking of the public amusements at Carraccas, I am naturally led to notice the game of tennis-ball, which is played either with the hand or with a battledore.

The Biscayans first introduced this diversion among the natives, who, although far from being adepts, yet play with sufficient address to afford amusement to the by-standers, who are fond of such sports. When the whites play at tennis-ball, which is very seldom, they generally make use of a battledore.

Besides tennis-courts, there are also a few billiard-rooms kept in this city, but they are very little frequented.

These constitute nearly the sum total of the amusements in Carraccas. It must not, however, be inferred from this circumstance, that the Spaniards are not given to gambling; on the contrary, they are more blindly devoted to it than even the French. On such occasions, neither loss nor gain is marked by any visible change in the features. The sensations either of good or bad fortune they confine wholly within themselves: in short, it is only during play, that they seem to attach no value to money. The police exerted all its power to counteract this destructive propensity to gaming, but in vain; for in order to elude its vigilance, they occasionally shifted the place of their meetings, and admitted none into the secret but those who were of the party.

If there were at Carraccas either public walks, lycea, literary societies, or coffee-rooms, this would doubtless be the proper place to notice them. But to the disgrace of this great city, I am forced to say, nothing of the kind is to be found. Every Spaniard resides in his own house as in a prison. He never leaves it but to go to church, or to transact professional business.

The city of Carraccas, according to a census taken by the clergy in 1802, contains thirty-one thousand two hundred and thirty-four souls; but from all the information I could collect on this subject, it appears to me that the population is much more considerable, and may amount to upwards of forty thousand.

All the whites boast of being noble: to speak correctly, a Spaniard is never considered a commoner unless he be poor. They are either farmers or merchants, or enter into the army, or become priests, or monks, or procure some situation in the financial or justiciary departments. None of them exercise any trade, or mechanical employment. A Spaniard, and still more particularly a creole, however poor he may be, would think himself disgraced if he earned his subsistance by the labour of his hands, or the sweat of his brow. He suffers hunger, thirst, and every species of hardship with admirable stoicism, since he considers nothing degrades man so much as labour. According to him, he can only preserve his own dignity, and that of his fa-

mily, by entering into the civil or military service, or by becoming a member of the church.

The Europeans who reside in this city, form two very distinct classes. The first comprehend those who receive appointments previous to their leaving Spain. The abuses which they commit in their official capacities, tend greatly to irritate the creoles, who consider it as an act of injustice, that such appointments should be conferred on others, rather than on themselves. The attempts of the creoles to rival them in profusion and magnificence, very forcibly brought to our recollection the fable of the ox and the frog. If the contest was for superiority of understanding, the prize would unquestionably be adjudged to the creoles; for in general, the emigrants from Europe are much less intelligent than themselves.

The creoles, as I have before observed, possess great natural parts. To an ardent desire for knowledge, they add the capability of application: both in the pulpit and at the bar, many of them have displayed great talents. If we do not likewise find among them profound economists, it must be owing to their studies being restricted to the canon or civil law alone.

The second class of Europeans who migrate to Carraccas, is composed of those who are attracted to it by a love of gain. Of all the provinces of old Spain, Catalonia and Biscay send out the greatest number of emigrants. The natives of these provinces evince an equal degree of industry; but the Biscayan, with apparently less effort, directs his exertions to a much better purpose. He is bolder in his commercial speculations, and more persevering in agriculture, than the Catalonian, who, though perhaps surpassing him in attention, displays not equal powers of mind, nor such comprehensive views. The former is never appalled by the magnitude or hazard of any speculation; he trusts much to chance and to good fortune. The second acts with greater circumspection. He never undertakes any enterprise but such as he judges easy of execution, and adapted to his powers. Their minds are so completely engrossed by the idea of amassing wealth, that they wholly neglect all intellectual improvement. Both are distinguished among their fellow citizens, by integrity in their transactions, and punctuality in their payments.

The Spaniards of the Canary islands, who are stimulated rather by want than ambition, to leave their native country, with the view of settling at Carraccas, possess not less industry than the Catalonians or Biscayans. In disposition, they resemble, however, more the latter than the former. All of them have proved themselves useful citizens, which in fact must ever be

the case with those who endeavour to gain a livelihood by the exertion of honest industry.

Beauty, sensibility, mild and engaging manners, characterize the female sex in the city of Carraccas. Their long black hair, their large and expressive eyes, the carnation colour of their lips, contrasted with the whiteness of their skin, all concur to render them extremely beautiful. Perhaps, it may be regretted, that their stature seldom corresponds with the exact symmetry of their figure. In general, they are rather beneath than above the middle size; their feet are, however, large in proportion to the other parts of the body. As they spend much of their time seated at windows, it should seem that nature had taken a delight in rendering that part of the body most captivating, which they expose most to public view. Their dress is very elegant, and well calculated to set off their charms to the greatest advantage. The education of boys attracts little attention in the city of Carraccas, but that of girls is wholly neglected. There is no seminary whatever appropriated for their instruction. They learn nothing except what their parents teach them. The whole of their education consists in being taught to say prayers, to read ill, and to write a wretched hand. They never receive any instruction from masters in dancing, drawing, or music. All that they acquire of the latter, scarcely enables them to execute a few airs on the guitar and the piano-forte. It is even rare to find any of them acquainted with the rudiments of music. This picture must only, however, be considered as applying to those whose husbands or relatives possess any fortune, or lucrative employment for the females at Carraccas, whom fate has condemned to earn a livelihood, are scarcely acquainted with any other means of dragging out a wretched existence, than that of prostituting themselves for hire. More than two hundred unfortunate females spend their lives, covered with rags, in paltry habitations, which they never quit unless during the night, in order to procure by the practice of vice a pitiful subsistance for the ensuing day. Their dress consists of a white veil and petticoat, with a pasteboard hat covered with taffety, to which is attached a sprig of artificial flowers and false jewels. Very frequently, the same dress serves alternately, even during the same night, two or three of the unfortunate beings who abandon themselves to such a course of life. What they fail to procure in this way, they endeavour to supply by soliciting charity. This, indeed, becomes their only resource, as soon as age and infirmities render them incapable of pursuing the same career of libertinism.

Domestic slaves are very numerous at Carraccas. An individual is judged rich in proportion to the number of slaves whom he supports. Unless he maintains in his house four times more

domestics than is necessary, it is considered as an indication of poverty, which every one is anxious to conceal. A poor white woman is frequently attended when she goes to mass with two negresses, or mulatto slaves, who constitute the whole of her property. Those who are well known to be rich, have frequently four or five servants in their train, whilst every white of the same family, who attends at another church, is allowed the same number. There are houses at Carraccas, containing from twelve to fifteen female servants, exclusive of valets and other domestics. The only infallible means of diminishing the absurd prejudice in favour of retaining so many domestics, would be to impose a heavy tax on each useless servant. If from false vanity, the rich should continue to support their usual establishment of domestic slaves, the product of the tax might be employed in the support of some public undertaking, which would compensate society for the privation of their labour.

There is not perhaps throughout the West Indies, a city wherein reside so many effranchised slaves, or their descendants, in proportion to the other classes, as in Carraccas. They exercise all those trades which the whites consider as degrading, such as carpentry, masonry, &c. In none of these trades do they, however, excel; because learning them mechanically, they are wholly ignorant of their principles. The indolence of temper, which is besides natural to them, extinguishes that spirit of emulation to which the arts are chiefly indebted for their advancement. In general, these workmen being burthened with families, live cooped up in wretched hovels, with no other bed than a bullock's hide, and no provisions but those which are raised in the country. Exceptions to this rule are extremely rare. In this state of poverty they can undertake no work that is not paid for by advance, never having in their possession a sufficient stock of materials; the consequence of which is, that they are always tardy in fulfilling their engagements. In fact, the majority of this class of men never labour but when stimulated by the calls of hunger; their predominant passion is to pass their lives in the exercise of religion. They form religious brotherhoods, which are connected with particular churches. Each of these fraternities adopts a habit differing only from one another in colour. It is a species of close robe, resembling that worn by monks. They assist at processions and at funerals. All the members walk in regular order, being preceded by the banners of the society to which they belong. It is worthy of observation, that there is not a single instance of any of these men having ever directed his attention to agricultural pursuits.

The youths at Carraccas, and throughout the archbishopric, receive their education in an united college and university. The

establishment of the college preceded that of the university by more than sixty years. It was formed by the worthy bishop Antoine Gonzales d'Acunna, who died in 1682. The Latin language was only taught in it, and there were no professorships, except those of philosophy and theology, until the augmentation of the city of Carraccas suggested the idea of enlarging the field of instruction by founding an university. For this purpose his holiness the pope granted a bull on the 19th August, 1722, which was afterwards confirmed by Philip II. The installation took place on the 11th August, 1725.

In this enlarged institution, besides a school for reading and writing, and three for the Latin language, there are established two professorships of philosophy, one of which is held by a secular priest and the other by a Dominican; two for scholastic divinity; one for ethics; and one for positive divinity*. This last ought always to be bestowed on a Dominican.

There are also a professor of civil law, one of canon law, and another of medicine.

The university and college of Carraccas possess only a capital of 47,748 piastres 6½ reals, yielding an annual interest of 2,387 piastres 3½ reals. From this sum are defrayed the salaries annexed to the twelve professorships.

The different degrees of bachelor, licentiate, and doctor, may be obtained at this university; the first is conferred by the rector, and the two others by the chancellor, who hold at the same time a canon-ship with the rank of schoolmaster.

Every graduate takes an oath to maintain the truth of the immaculate conception, neither to teach nor practice regicide or tyrannicide, and to defend the doctrine of Saint Thomas.

In 1802 there were sixty-four boarders in this university, and four hundred and two day-scholars, distributed as follows: in the lower classes, including rhetoric, - - 202

Philosophy - - - -	140
Theology - - - -	36
Canon and civil law - - -	55
Medicine - - - - -	11
Music - - - -	22
	466

It is to this seminary that the church is indebted for its ministers, the law for its magistrates, and the country for its defenders.

* Or that which is agreeable to the positions and tenets of the fathers of the church. T

The Spaniards are perhaps of all people the most inattentive to regulations of police. Their natural sobriety, and especially their phlegmatic character, render quarrels and tumults extremely rare. Hence there is seldom heard any noise in the streets of Carraccas. The most melancholy silence reigns every where. Three or four thousand individuals, when leaving church, make scarcely any noise; while so many Frenchmen, in the same situation, would produce such a bustle, as to be heard at a considerable distance.

But though the magistrate has nothing to apprehend from tumults, he would be very much to blame, if he slackened his vigilance on that account. Assassinations, robberies, frauds, and intrigues render both zeal and sagacity needful, in order that he may take such steps, and enter into such investigations, as to bring the delinquents to justice.

The Spaniard is no more exempt than another from a vindictive spirit, which is so much the more dangerous in him as he never aims his blows but in secret, and covers himself with the mask of friendship, in order more certainly to accomplish his nefarious purpose. He who by his rank in society can only avenge himself by his own hands, scarcely evinces any resentment when an offence is committed against him; but from that moment he watches the first opportunity, which seldom escapes him, of plunging his poniard into the heart of his new enemy; which being accomplished, he seeks his own safety by flying to some sanctuary or sacred asylum, in order that the ecclesiastical tribunal may interfere, to represent as an unfortunate accident his premeditated murder, and as a slight crime an act deserving the punishment of death.

The Spaniards of Andalusia are in particular reproached as guilty of this criminal habit. I was assured at Carraccas, that such unfortunate events have only occurred since the year 1778, at which period the liberty of trading with the provinces of Venezuela, formerly confined to the company of Guipuscoa, was extended to almost every port in Spain, and attracted to Carraccas many Spaniards from all the provinces, but especially from Andalusia.

Almost all the assassinations which occur at Carraccas, are perpetrated by Europeans. Those of which the creoles stand accused, are as rare as the robberies charged upon the former. The whites, or pretended whites of the country, who through idleness, and the vices which it engenders, plunge into drunkenness and every species of dissipation, and the emancipated slaves, who consider it as an unsufferable hardship to support themselves by their own labour, are those alone on whom the reproach is cast of committing all the robberies at Carraccas.

The adoption of false weights and measures, and the adulteration of provisions of every kind, are likewise very prevalent at Carraccas; for such practices are considered less as acts of knavery than of dexterity, of which the individuals make a boast. Here then is sufficient business to occupy all the vigilance of the police magistrates. Many other matters equally require their attention, such as supplying the inhabitants with provisions, who in general seem to think that they are extremely remiss in the performance of this part of their duty. However incredible it may appear, it is certain that Carraccas, the capital of provinces which might supply cattle to all the foreign possessions of America, is frequently destitute, for several days during the year, of butcher's meet.

If filth does not accumulate in the streets, it is owing more to the abundant rains than to the attention of the police; for they are seldom swept, except in contemplation of some approaching procession. Those through which such processions do not pass, are covered with the *panicum dactylum,* Lin. creeping panic-grass.

Mendicity in all countries claims the attention of the police; but no cognizance is taken of it in Carraccas. The streets are crowded with beggars of both sexes, who chuse rather to owe their subsistence to the bounty of passengers than to the exertion of their own industry. Religion, which in this respect is so very ill understood, interdicts, according to the Spaniards, all investigation into the capability of mendicants procuring themselves a livelihood by any other means than soliciting charity. They believe, or act as if they believed, that the recommendation in the gospel to give alms, is an invitation to demand them. As soon as an individual embraces this condition of life, instead of being annoyed, he is protected by the police. The decrepid and robust, the old and the young, the blind and those who enjoy their sight, are all considered as having an equal right to charity. Every one withholds or gives according to his abilities, without reflecting on the real necessity of the mendicant. A stranger is at first at a loss how to reconcile this indiscriminate charity of the Spaniards, with the revolting picture which beggars exhibit every night, sleeping in the open streets, or by the side of church-walls, &c. without any covering to protect them against inclement weather, or against the noxious dews of the torrid zone. On a cursory view, we are induced to believe ourselves in a country inhabited by cruel savages; but on a nearer inspection, we readily discover that such wretchedness proceeds from mistaken piety. Those whom we conceive to be unfortunate beings are merely mendicants, who are prevented by intoxication from seeking a more convenient asylum, and who shun sleeping in

the hospitals, because, in that case, they would not be permitted to dissipate their gains in procuring *tafia*, or other strong liquor. The police is well acquainted with these abuses, but cannot repress them, without incurring the charge of impiety. The religious garb of the mendicant frees him from all restraint, exempts him from censure of every kind, and renders his person inviolable.

In order to form some idea of the number of mendicants in Carraccas, it is only necessary to mention, that at a general almsgiving, held every Saturday by the archbishop, each of them receives half an escalin, or the sixteenth part of a piastre, and that on such occasions a less sum than 75 or 76 piastres, is never distributed. Hence there cannot be fewer than twelve hundred mendicants, exclusively of the industrious poor, who exceed that number, and on whom the worthy prelate D. Francois d'Ibarra, a creole of Carraccas, bestows a great portion of his revenue in private donations. Ought not a well-regulated police to separate from the profligate the helpless indigent, and provide for them in houses appropriated for that purpose? Ought it not to coerce the others to labour in proportion to their capability, which would more than compensate for their maintenance? Can it be seriously believed that to constrain men to labour is a work less acceptable to the Deity, than that of supporting them in a state of idleness and vicious habits, which are equally offensive to religion, morality, and public order? These abuses will doubtless be eventually remedied by some alterations in the existing municipal laws. God grant that the prejudices of habit may yield to reason, and that the city of Carraccas may enjoy the advantages of a wise administration, on which depend the peace, the union, and the happiness of any people!

Though Carraccas is naturally the centre of all communication with the interior, yet the roads, as may readily be conceived, from the vast extent of the country, and its scanty population, are in a very wretched state. Sloughs and the inundations of rivers, equally destitute of bridges and ferry-boats, render the roads impassable during the rainy season, but at no period of the year are they convenient. Distances are computed not by leagues, but by days' journies; each of which, according to my own experience, may be equal to ten geometrical leagues.

Government dispatches are transmitted by express, as well as all the accounts and complaints laid before it. Couriers only proceed at regular intervals from the capital to Maracaybo, Porto-Cavello, Santa-Fè, Cumana, and Guiana.

Official dispatches from the mother country arrive every month at Carraccas. A king's packet sails on the first, second, or third

day of every month from Corunna, touches at the Canaries, and after landing its letters for these islands, proceeds to the Havannah, and delivers, in passing Porto-Rico, the dispaches for that island, as well as those for the Carraccas, which last are immediately forwarded in small vessels built for the express purpose.

During war, the Spanish packets, instead of touching at Porto-Rico, land at Cumana the letters destined for Carraccas, and its dependencies, after which they proceed to Carthagena with those for the kingdom of Santa-Fè, &c. and always put in at the Havannah, whence they set sail for Europe at stated periods. All the letters from Carraccas, whether official or not, are transmitted to Spain in merchant vessels, which take their departure from Goayre for Cadiz.

The reader has already been made acquainted with the trade carried on in Carraccas, and the European articles which are most valued in the different provinces. If the port of Caravalleda had not been abandoned by its inhabitants, as already related, Goayre would most probably have continued to be only the resort of fishers, as it is in every respect greatly inferior to the former.

The city, or, according to the Spaniards, who never bestow this appellation on any place where a cabildo is not established, the village of Goayre is so buried in the midst of very high mountains, that the fragments of rock which are frequently loosened from them, do considerable mischief. There is no visible horizon, except toward the sea, on the north, from which may be readily explained the cause of the great heats that prevail during nine months of the year. Here Reaumur's thermometer usually indicates from 25° to 28°. Every year in the months of July, August, and September, the inhabitants are very generally attacked by putrid and malignant fevers, which prove extremely fatal, particularly to those who have newly arrived from Europe.

Goayre is an irregular city. The streets are narrow, ill-paved, not lighted, and the appearance of the houses extremely wretched.

The batteries by which it is defended, are regularly built, and are the only thing worthy the attention of a traveller. The government wished to render it simply a military post, while the merchants, on the contrary, were anxious to preserve it as a commercial port.

Very few merchants reside at Goayre. All commercial affairs are transacted at Carraccas, and they only proceed to that place in order to receive the cargoes assigned to them from Europe, or those which they may purchase on their arrival in port. In both cases they are sent to Carraccas to be sold; no part of the lading is left, except what is sufficient to supply the wants of the

inhabitants. The commodities stored up at Carraccas, are in return sent to Goayre, in order to be shipped.

The road between these two cities, though steep, is extremely good, except during the rainy season. The distance is computed to be about five leagues, and the journey usually performed by mules moderately laden, in five hours. The saddle mules, proceeding at a slow pace, accomplish it in three hours and a half. Immediately on leaving Goayre, the road ascends, according to the measurement of Humboldt, nearly six hundred and eighty four toises, and again descends two hundred and thirty four, before reaching Carraccas. At the height of five hundred and seventy-six toises, stands an inn, where the traveller usually reposes himself and his cattle.

The city of Goayre is supplied with water from a rivulet, which takes its rise in a small mountain about two leagues distant from the sea. It is disagreeable to drink this water, from its being always tepid; it is reported to possess an anti-syphilitic quality, contracted by flowing over soil abounding with the roots of sarsaparilla.

This city is governed by a commander, who likewise holds the office of lieutenant of justice. He is invested with the right, in the first instance, of determining all civil causes, but his decision is subject to an appeal before the royal audience. His principal duty consists in daily rendering an account to the captain-general of the arrival and departure of vessels in and from the road. He dare not suffer any foreigner to proceed to Carraccas, without having previously obtained the captain-general's permission to that purpose, which is easily obtained, if the motives alledged for the request be satisfactory.

The ordinary garrison at this place is composed of a company taken from the regiment of Carraccas. In time of war it is reinforced from other regiments of the line, and from the militia of Carraccas.

The population of Goayre is estimated at six thousand individuals, of whom a hundred and thirty are employed in armed vessels; seven hundred and eleven constitute the garrison, or are employed in guarda-costas, or in galleys: their chaplain performs the functions of curé. There is but one parish church in the place, the duty of which is performed by a curé.

The port of Borburata, situated a league to the east of Porto-Cavello, or Porto-Cavallo, as it is sometimes termed, was long in the exclusive possession of the trade of that part of the province of Venezuela, which at present centres in this last port. From the first conquest of America by the Spaniards, until the establishment of the company of Guipuscoa, Porto-Cavello was occupied by fishermen, and those concerned in carrying on the

contraband trade with the Dutch. This company immediately took advantage of the excellence of the harbour, in order to establish one of their principal magazines in this place. Their naval superiority afforded a ready means of accomplishing so desirable an object. From this period the lawless and motley inhabitants of Porto-Cavello found themselves compelled to submit to certain municipal restrictions; but though this circumstance, and the progressive influx of European settlers, have in a great measure destroyed their original character, Porto-Cavello still continues, after the lapse of a century, to afford an asylum to individuals of both sexes, whose crimes or misconduct have forced them to fly from the interior of the provinces.

A magnificent pier was constructed by the orders of the company, ninety-two feet long by twelve broad, for the accommodation of the shipping, and forts erected for their defence. An extensive building served for a store-house, &c. and still remains, though the company have been deprived of its privileges. The system it adopted of employing only Biscayans on board its vessels and in its warehouses, attracted a great number of individuals of this province from those places where they had been formerly settled. It cannot then be a matter of surprise to find, in Porto-Cavello, a class of Europeans composed only of Biscayans, who are no less remarkable for their morality and industry, than for the singularity of their language.

The city, properly so called, is built so near the sea, that part of it stands on ground, which is daily washed by the tide. It is evident from the walls of this city, that its founders did not expect it would increase so rapidly as it has done, and which has rendered it necessary to extend the buildings over twice the space originally marked out as its limits. The old city is surrounded by the sea, except for about a hundred toises to the west, where a canal has been cut to join the two arms of the sea; so that it is impossible to leave the city, except by a bridge, on which is stationed the principal guard, and where a gate is erected, which is shut every evening.

The houses beyond the city are chiefly erected on a tongue of land to the west, which is never covered by the waters; they are built at random without any fixed plan, and are not subject to the same regulations as those within the walls; but the commandant has it in his power to cause them to be erazed, if he deem it necessary to the furtherance of the public service. Hence when the first street was formed, called *Calle, or Rue de la Heringo,* it was neither built in a line, nor had the houses any regular dimensions. This attempt, however, was sufficient to give disgust to the commander of the place, who represented to his

superiors, that the suburbs, which would soon rival in importance Porto-Cavello itself, would tend by their proximity to obstruct the defence of the city; since it would be impossible to fire the guns of the fort at the mouth of the harbour, without entirely demolishing them; and for this damage, which the presence of an enemy would render inevitable, the proprietors would doubtless demand compensation from the king. In consequence of this representation, an order was sent to the inhabitants to abandon this position; but on their offering to run every risk in the event of an attack, without requiring any indemnity, they obtained, not only permission to retain the houses already built, but to construct others. From this period, the buildings were carried on with greater confidence, and constructed with more regularity. New streets were projected, and particular portions of ground marked out for squares, public markets, &c. and this part, which is now considered as a continuation of the city, is become the residence of the principal merchants.

The population of Porto-Cavello is computed to be seven thousand five hundred individuals, none of whom pride themselves upon being noble, except the military officers and the members of the administration.

The white inhabitants are mostly either engaged in commerce or in navigation. Their principal commercial connections, however, are with the ports of the same continent, and those of the neighbouring islands; for though this port has, since 1796, been allowed the privilege of carrying on a free trade with the mother country, they have hitherto scarcely availed themselves of this permission. Never more than four or five ships arrive annually from Spain, while above sixty vessels of different burdens are employed in the coasting trade; the greatest share of which is monopolized by Curaçoa and Jamaica. If we were to form our opinions by the custom-house reports, such commercial relations are of very little consequence, since the value of the cargoes are trifling, and the ostensible returns still more insignificant. But large sums of money are secretly sent by these ships, in order to purchase at Curaçoa and Jamaica, dry commodities, which they either land on some part of the coast before reaching the destined port, or clandestinely send ashore on their return, according to the intelligence they have received and other circumstances.

Porto-Cavello is the entrepôt of all the eastern part of the province of Venezuela. Its magazines furnish the different articles consumed in the districts of Valence, Saint Carlos, Barquisimeto, Saint Philippe, and part of the valley of Aragoa; and it is to Porto-Cavello that the greatest part of the commodities raised in these different places are sent. The trade of this

port is chiefly in the hands of about twenty European merchants; it is more commodious than any other harbour of Terra-Firma, either for the construction of new vessels, or for repairing those which may have received any damage.

Porto-Cavello could not fail to become the first port in America, were the town not so unhealthy. This does not, however, proceed from the air being less pure than elsewhere, or from the excessive heat not being moderated by a regular sea and land breeze; since the ships' crews, who have no communication with the shore, are never affected with those malignant diseases to which the inhabitants ars so subject. A stranger is apt to conceive, from a cursory view of the country, that the insalubrity of this place is owing to the exhalations from a kind of marsh formed by the sea, towards the east of the city; but this cannot be the case, as the houses in its immediate vicinity are more healthy than those situated at a greater distance.

The same, however, cannot be affirmed respecting the southern part of the city, where an argillaceous plain, of considerable extent, retains the rain water, which becoming rapidly putrid, exhales, on the first rain after an interval of dry weather, pestilential miasmata, capable of destroying the most vigorous health, and contaminating the purest atmosphere. Those who inhabit this quarter of the city, are observed more particularly to fall victims to malignant diseases, as likewise the settlers lately arrived from Europe.

In 1793, a Spanish squadron, commanded by lieutenant-general Ariztizabal, anchored in Porto-Cavello, where it remained from July to the month of December; during which period, a third of the crews of the different vessels fell a victim to disease. It is even probable that a still greater number would have perished, but for the attention and skill of Don Gaspar de Juliac, physician to the king at Porto-Cavello. This gentleman possesses, in fact, such distinguished talents, that he is not only consulted by the inhabitants of Terra-Firma, but by those of the neighbouring islands, in all important cases.

In 1802, the French vessels *le Tourville* and *le Zele*, with the corvette *l'Utile* and the galliot *Adelaide*, were sent on a mission from St. Domingo to Porto-Cavello, which port they entered on the 5th of July. The crews had scarcely set foot on the shore before they were attacked with the malignant fever of the country, which in the space of twenty days, cut off a hundred and sixty men including officers. As it appeared evident that a longer stay would have so much thinned the different crews as to render it unsafe to put to sea, the squadron was obliged to depart without fulfilling the object of their mission. It is worthy of remark, that the ship *Zele*, the captain of which did not at first

permit his sailors to frequent the city, was the last to experience the effects of the contagion, and that his crew remained uninfected until a communication was opened with the shore. We cannot, however, dissemble that the opportunities for intemperance afforded in the city, add greatly to the malignancy of the disease. The endemic malady of Porto-Cavello, like that of all other tropical countries on a level with the sea and near the coasts, is known under the name of the yellow fever, against which the art of medicine has hitherto vainly essayed its strength.

Reason and humanity, however, equally prescribe to the Spanish government the propriety of draining the marsh, which contains the germs of this plague, and which, from the situation of the ground, might readily be accomplished by making cuts of a sufficient descent, to give a free exit to the water, both towards the sea and an adjacent river. I have heard it affirmed, by persons intimately acquainted with the subject, that twenty thousand piastres would render Porto-Cavello equally healthy as any other place in Terra-Firma. The water with which Porto-Cavello is supplied for domestic purposes, is brought from a stream about a quarter of a league west from the city. It flows through pipes constructed with more care than success, and is distributed to the inhabitants in fountains erected at convenient distances. In dry weather, this water is extremely good; but during the rainy season, it is mixed with so many extraneous particles, as to render its use neither pleasant nor wholesome. This inconvenience may, however, be readily obviated by the employment of filtering-stones. Unfortunately, this luxury is attainable only by the rich, while the poor remain exposed to all the disagreeable consequences resulting from its use.

The city being viewed in the light of a garrison, is placed under the superintendence of a military commander, whose powers are almost unlimited. The municipal, and even the judiciary departments, are under his immediate controul; but his decisions are subject to an appeal to the royal audience. The inhabitants some time ago solicited the establishment of a cabildo; they have yet, however, obtained only one alcade, who is elected annually. Since his appointment in 1800, it must be admitted, that more inconvenience than advantage has arisen to the citizens; as the frequent collision between the civil and military authority has given rise to processes, which have proved destructive to the general harmony.

It is not by magnificent temples that religion is honoured in Porto-Cavello. There is only one parish church, situated near the port, and not a single convent. Some time ago the foundation of a new church was laid at the southern extremity of the city, but the donations and alms collected for this purpose, have

not yet enabled the projectors to raise it above breast high. Scarcely was it perceived that the want of money would condemn this infant edifice to remain for ever a monument of the lukewarmness of the faithful of Porto-Cavello, than the priests had recourse to a means of forwarding their design; which has not, however, answered their expectation. They agreed that henceforth the only penance imposed upon the sinner, should be to carry stones to the work in question, the number and weight of which should be regulated by the magnitude of the offences he had committed. But crimes are either very rare in Porto-Cavello, or else the penitent trusted to the simple avowal of his fault to ensure pardon, or he was willing to conceal altogether faults that would lead to such a public punishment; but certain it is, that they did not obtain by this measure above a few dozen of stones, brought by infirm Negroes and old women, who became very soon fatigued by this exercise.

I have likewise seen young females carrying stones to this edifice; some in the hopes of fixing inconstant husbands, others to procure the blessing of a progeny, and many with the view of discovering stolen or lost goods. Unfortunately, none of these supplicants received an answer to their prayers; nothing more was deemed necessary to prove that God, in refusing to perform miracles in this spot, declared it unworthy to possess one of his temples. On this consideration, the work was instantly abandoned.

There are two hospitals in Porto-Cavello, the one is appropriated for the reception of soldiers, and the other for the accommodation of the citizens. The first is known under the name of the *Military Hospital*, the second is termed *La Charité*.

The garrison consists of a company from the regiment of Carraccas in time of peace, but is reinforced during war by detachments from the troops of the line and the militia. They have, besides, always three or four hundred galley-slaves employed on the public works.

The administration is composed of a treasurer, a *contador*, and several writers; a store-keeper, a visitor, and thirty men under the orders of a garde-major, whose duty consists in preventing the contraband trade.

Porto-Cavello is thirty leagues distant from Carraccas by sea, and forty-eight by the way of Valence, Maracay, Tulmero, Victoria, and San-Pedro.

Reaumur's thermometer in the month of January, indicates from 18° to 19°, and in August it usually rises to 26°.

The latitude of Porto-Cavello is 10° 20′ north, and its longitude 70° 30′ west from the meridian of Paris.

The city of Valence was founded in 1555, under the govern-

ment of Villacinda. In conformity to his order, it ought to have been built upon the bank of lake Tacarigoa, now called Valence; but Alonso Dias Moreno, who was entrusted with its execution, being a man of good sense, judged it proper, from the insalubrity of the immediate vicinity of the lake, to fix upon a spot at a short distance. He therefore selected a piece of ground about half a league west of the lake, in a beautiful plain, of which the fertility and the purity of the air, seemed, as it were, to invite man to fix upon it his habitation. Here then was the city founded under the name of *Valence du roi*. It is 10° 9′ north latitude, and 70° 45′ west longitude from the meridian of Paris.

Its population, according to a census taken by the clergy in 1801, amounts to six thousand five hundred and forty-eight souls; but from another and more accurate computation, it contains above eight thousand persons. The inhabitants are all creoles, of distinguished and very ancient families, except some Canarians, and a few Biscayans. The streets are broad, and mostly paved. The houses are built in the same style as those at Carraccas, but lower.

The duty is performed in the only parish church belonging to this city, by two curés and a sacristan. It is a handsome edifice, situated on the east side of a fine square, which altogether forms the principal ornament of the city.

At the extremity of the town stands a church, built in 1804, dedicated to our Lady of Chandeleur. This structure was raised by the Canarians resident in Valence, assisted by donations from the faithful of every description.

There is also a convent of Franciscans, which existed for two centuries in a state of the most abject poverty. The church attached to this institution is neatly constructed, and from the convent itself having lately been repaired, we may conclude that the days of their wretchedness have passed by.

About fifty years ago, the inhabitants of Valence were considered to be the most indolent of any throughout the extent of the province. They feared that labour, which according to them was only the portion of a commoner, would contaminate the noble blood they inherited from their ancestors. They never entertained the most remote idea, that man could attain to a distinguished rank in society except by entering into the navy or army. All other professions they regarded as ignoble, debasing, and contemptible. Poverty and privations of every kind, conspired to arouse them from this state of degrading indolence; but every stimulus proved ineffectual for they continued to lament their fate in groans, and to send up useless prayers to Providence for assistance. Their inactivity at last became so great, that the commandant found it necessary, in order to secure a supply of pro-

visions, to order each inhabitant to cultivate a certain portion of ground under a very severe penalty. Every infraction of this order was rigorously punished; and becoming gradually accustomed to the idea, that labour exalted, instead of degrading man, they seriously began to devote their attention to agriculture and commerce.

Since this fortunate revolution, Valence has lost much of its former wretched aspect, and assumed the appearance of greater affluence. Its situation gives to it many striking advantages over the other cities of Venezuela. Situated at only ten leagues distance from Porto-Cavello, to which there is an excellent road, commodities can be transported thither at a very trifling expence; and after the opening of a new road, which is already begun to be formed, the distance will be reduced to six leagues. But it is not to the agriculturist alone that Valence possesses so many advantages, it is equally convenient to the merchant,

Every article sent from the interior of the country in order to be embarked at Porto-Cavello, passes through Valence, in like manner, as those destined for the port of Goayre proceed by the way of Carraccas. All commodities from the valley of Aragoa, the district of Saint-Philippe, Saint-Charles, Saint-Jean-Baptiste del Pao, Tocuyo, Barquisimeto, and all the plain, must of necessity be sent by that route. Why then do not the inhabitants of Valence conceive the idea of forming a magazine of commodities, intended for Porto-Cavello, as well as a store for the merchandize sent from hence to the interior?

The city is exceedingly well supplied with all kinds of provisions, and a profusion of the most exquisite fruits, as well as with an abundance of animal food, which is sold at a very cheap rate.

On the eastern side of the lake of Valence, in the celebrated vale of Aragoa, which I have oftener than once had occasion to mention, stands the town of Maracay. It is within such a distance of the lake as to reap all its advantages, without experiencing any bad effects from its vicinity. The sandy nature of the soil, however it may augment the heat, contributes greatly to its salubrity. This village, which, about thirty years ago, scarcely exceeded the size of a hamlet, now presents a prospect that cannot fail to excite the admiration of every beholder. Three fourths of the houses are built of stone, and display considerable elegance. One circumstance which in particular struck me, was, that they all appeared of the same date, and to have been built very recently. The streets are not paved, but this defect is not perceived, unless when the sand is raised up by the wind, and blown into the eyes. A new parish church has lately been reared, which possesses considerable elegance, and is of large di-

mensions. At Maracay there is no clergyman, but one curé; and the exercise of the civil power is entrusted to a single officer or magistrate.

This village contains a population of more than eight thousand inhabitants, who by their industry attract the notice of every observer. The vanity of birth and the pride of rank are equally disregarded by them. Industry and activity form the only bond of their union. Their ruling passion is the love of agriculture, in which they display the most happy emulation. The numerous plantations of cotton, indigo, coffee, &c. in the management of which skill and care are equally conspicuous, unequivocally shew their uniform industry, and explain the reason of their affluent circumstances. It seems highly probable that the most of them are Biscayans; for of all the European Spaniards who inhabit Terra-Firma, they are the most industrious, and the most devoted to agricultural pursuits. The natives of the Canaries, although extremely indefatigable, cannot be compared with them.

The fine plantations which are beheld with rapture in the environs of Maracay, are not, however, confined to it, but extend through all the vale of Aragoa. Whether we proceed by the way of Valence, or over the mountains of Saint Pedro, by which it is divided from Carraccas, we conceive ourselves transported among another people, and into a new region, inhabited by a nation, of all others the most industrious and agricultural. Throughout this vale, which stretches fifteen leagues from east to west, artificial irrigation is adopted, and every where are to be seen water-mills, and magnificent edifices for assisting in the manufacture and preparation of colonial productions. What seems singular, is that such extraordinary industry appeared to be confined to this spot alone. The culture in the vale of Aragoa is mostly performed by free men, in consideration of reasonable wages, so that the proprietor is never under the necessity of keeping many slaves.

Tulmero, situated also in the vale of Aragoa, at the distance of two leagues from Maracay, is likewise a very modern and regular village. In it reside many husbandmen, as well as all the officers, factors, and others, who superintend the tobacco which is raised in the environs for the behoof of the king. Its population amounts to eight thousand persons.

At six leagues eastward from Tulmero, and near the highway leading to Carraccas, stands the village of Victoria, which was founded by the missionaries, and continued to be solely inhabited by Indians, until that a few industrious whites, settled in the vale of Aragoa, fixed on Victoria as the place of their residence. It then quickly assumed a very different appearance: the lands were cleared, and decent houses soon occupied the place where for-

merly stood the paltry huts of the Indians. The ground on which it stands is full of the same irregularities which it originally had, and which there is every reason to suppose will long remain; for the inhabitants pay less attention to its embellishment, than to the construction of a church, which shall vie in point of beauty and grandeur, with the finest cathedrals in America. But the exertions which were prompted by the zeal and activity of Don Miguel de Adarraga have been suspended since the appointment of the present administration.

Victoria, according to a recent computation, contains seven thousand eight hundred inhabitants. The whites, who constitute a part of this population, solicited the king to bestow upon their village the more pompous appellation of city; the consequence of which would have been the establishment of a cabildo, which was the true object of their request. But as it appears to be the opinion of his Catholic majesty's ministers, that such municipal institutions are more injurious than favourable to the regal prerogative, their request has hitherto been evaded; so that Victoria still remains a village, governed by a lieutenant of justice and a regidor.

Although the inhabitants are comparatively industrious, yet they are less so than in some other parts of the vale of Aragoa. What palpably proves this is, that they are excessively given to gaming, and we know that this baneful passion operates to destroy all industry.

Victoria is the residence of the field-officers of the militia of Aragoa. In the same vale are also situated the villages of Cagoa, San-matteo, Mamon, formerly El-Consejo, Escobar, and Magdelena. The first contains five thousand five hundred inhabitants; the second two thousand eight hundred; the third three thousand; the fourth five thousand four hundred; and the fifth two thousand seven hundred.

In 1786, there were in the valley of Aragoa, one hundred and eighty six plantations, and one thousand six hundred and thirty houses; which were reckoned to contain,

10,929	Whites.
447	free Indians.
3,378	tributary Indians.
12,159	People of colour.
3,882	Slaves.
30,795	

At the present period, 1804, this population amounts nearly to fifty thousand persons of all descriptions.

After Cumana, Coro formed the second settlement of the

Europeans in the eastern part of Terra Firma. The city of Coro is situated in a dry and sandy plain. Though the soil be in general very steril and unproductive, yet there are a few spots less ungrateful, and which yield, when subjected to careful culture, but not in great abundance, the common provisions of the country.

The inhabitants of Coro, like most Spaniards, are devoted to a sedentary and indolent life. Many of them boast of being descended from the first conquerors of the country; from which we may infer, that it contains more of nobility than riches, and more idle than industrious inhabitants.

The little commerce which it carries on, consists of mules, goats, hides, sheep-skins, cheeses, &c. which are, in general, brought from the interior of the country. The village of Carora supplies the greatest part of these articles to the inhabitants of Coro, who afterwards export them to the adjacent islands. The most intimate connection subsists between it and Curaçao, from which they import dry goods, either clandestinely, or by bribing the custom-house officers.

Ten thousand persons of all descriptions compose the population of the city of Coro. It contains very few slaves, because the Indians, who every where else are partial to the blacks, here display the most rooted antipathy to them.

This antipathy proved very conducive to the maintenance of public tranquillity in 1797, when the field negroes, operated on by the example of the blacks in Saint Domingo, revolted, and committed several outrages. On that occasion, the Indians joining with the whites, marched against the insurgents, and displayed a courage of which they were not supposed capable. The revolt was quickly suppressed, and order re-established. The rebels at no time exceeded four hundred.

Labour of every kind is performed at Coro by the Indians, who, in consideration of their extreme poverty, are forced to hire themselves for wages altogether inadequate to their toil.

The water with which the inhabitants are supplied, is brought in barrels by asses into the city from half a league's distance. Two of these barrels compose a load, and are sold at one real.

Formerly the houses appear to have been substantial and well-built, but at present we cannot view them without sorrow. They all display a picture of poverty and extreme wretchedness; those inhabited by the Indians are still in a worse state. The streets, although regular, are not paved. The public edifices consecrated to religion, consist of a parish church, formerly a cathedral, to which the inhabitants still apply this appellation, though neither bishop nor chapter has belonged to it for more than a hundred and sixty

years, the duty being performed by two curés, a convent of Franciscans, and a parish church with three chapels of ease.

The civil power is exercised by a cabildo. Since 1799 a military commander has been appointed, who shares the exercise of the judicial and municipal authority; he receives an annual salary of 2000 piastres.

This city is situated at the distance of a league from the sea, eighty leagues west from Carraccas, thirty-three north from Barquisimeto, and fifty-five from Maracaybo.

Two leagues north from Coro, is an isthmus about a league in breadth, which unites the peninsula of Paragoana to the continent. It stretches from south-west to the north-west, for nearly twenty leagues; it is inhabited by Indians and a few whites, who, led by a taste for pastoral life, have fixed upon this spot as their place of residence. The animals reared on it are extremely numerous, and are for the most part clandestinely transported to Curaçao, in consequence of which, its shambles are always better supplied with butcher's meat, than those of the principal cities of Terra-Firma.

The city of Carora is situated thirty leagues south from Coro. Its situation is remarkably healthy, but in dry seasons its inhabitants suffer much from a want of water. Its soil, which is extremely arid and covered with thorny plants, yields only such productions as require a great degree of heat to bring them to maturity.

Here is found a species of cochineal, but no care is taken to preserve it. Here also are found balsams equally fragrant and odoriferous as those of Arabia, as well as various aromatic resins, which are extolled on account of their vulnerary qualities, and as preservatives against spasmodic or tetanic affections. But the inhabitants of Carora do not turn their attention to such objects; they appear to be altogether engrossed with the rearing of cattle, mules, horses, sheep, goats, &c. The application and activity they exert in this way, is deserving of the highest praise, and induces us to believe that there are few cities in the West Indies wherein so much industry is displayed as at Carora.

The principal inhabitants subsist on the produce of their flocks and herds; all the others earn a livelihood by manufacturing the raw materials which these produce. The skins and hides are tanned in a manner suitable to their several qualities. It must, however, be allowed, that their manipulations are not conducted with much skill; for though self-love induces them to throw the blame on the bad quality of the tan, and of the water which they are constrained to employ, yet it is certain, that the inferiority of these articles is owing to their ignorance of the process proper to be employed. Be this, however, as it may, the purchasers

have not much reason to complain, since it is almost impossible to conceive, how they can afford such articles, whatever be their quality, for the low price at which they are sold.

The leather prepared at Caraçoa, is mostly employed in the city itself, for the purpose of making boots, shoes, saddles, bridles, and harness of different kinds. What exceeds the local consumption is sold in the province, or is sent to Maracaybo, Carthagena, or the island of Cuba. They likewise fabricate at Carora, from a species of aloe, very excellent hammocs, for which they find a ready market.

These and similar manufactures furnish constant employment for a population of six thousand two hundred individuals, who must otherwise, from the sterility of the soil, be condemned to live in poverty.

The streets of Carora are broad and run at right angles with each other; the parish church is a handsome edifice, and kept in good repair. Annexed to it is a chapel of ease, dedicated to Saint Denis the Areopagite. There is likewise a convent of Franciscans

The administration of justice and police is entrusted to a lieutenant appointed by the governor and a cabildo. No authority whatever is exercised by the military.

Carora lies fifteen leagues eastward from the lake af Maracaybo, twelve leagues to the north of Tocuyo, eighteen leagues north-west from Barquisimeto, and ninety leagues to the west of Carraccas.

Barquisimeto, a city more ancient than Carraccas, is situated in 9° 45′ N. lat. upon a plain, which from its elevation is so exposed to every breeze, that the heat becomes very supportable. Reaumur's thermometer rises from 28° to 29° whenever the rays of the sun meet with nothing in the atmosphere to moderate their scorching heat. The wind which prevails most at Barquisimeto, is the north-east.

The excellent pasturage of the plains renders the rearing of all kinds of cattle extremely easy. Hence many of the inhabitants embark their capitals in this speculation, and find it extremely profitable. They make a considerable quantity of cheese, and have of late turned their attention to the cultivation of the sugar-cane.

The vallies, whose freshness and verdure are preserved by means of irrigation, yield cocoa in great profusion, and of an excellent quality; the coffee-tree is now also cultivated on the adjoining hills, and nothing seems requisite to render the fruit of a very superior quality, but a little more attention in the preparation.

If we only consider the fertile and improvable land which still remains uncultivated, we should certainly be inclined to ac-

cuse the inhabitants of great indolence; but when we cast our eyes over the different plantations, and on the vast herds of cattle feeding in the plains; and when we reflect on the difficulty attendant on the carriage of commodities to the seaports, the nearest of which and the most frequented lies at fifty leagues distance, it would be unjust to withold our praises from the inhabitants of Barquisimeto. The appearance of the city sufficiently indicates the affluence of the inhabitants, who amount to eleven thousand three hundred; the houses are well built; the streets run at right angles with each other, and are sufficiently broad to admit of a free circulation of air. The parish church is a handsome structure, in which the duty is performed by two curés. There is in this church the representation of a Christ, which is the object of public veneration and devotion to all the inhabitants for twenty leagues round. Here is also a convent of Franciscans, as well as an hospital, but it is very ill endowed. The judicial and municipal functions are exercised by a cabildo and lieutenant nominated by the governor. Barquisimeto is situated eighty leagues west-south-west from Carraccas, one hundred and fifty leagues north-north-east from Santa Fé, and fifteen leagues north-east from Tocuyo.

The city of Tocuyo stands in a valley formed by two mountains; its streets are spacious, and run at right angles with one another: a very well constructed edifice serves as a parish church, with which is connected a chapel of ease; there is also a convent of Franciscans, and another of Dominicans. Tocuyo is governed by a cabildo. The atmosphere is here often cloudy, and the air rather cold than warm: on the whole, however, it is extremely salubrious.

The soil is of such a nature as to furnish almost every kind of production, and the inhabitants avail themselves of this advantage. They are husbandmen, agriculturists, artizans, and merchants. The cheese made in Tocuyo is reckoned the best in the whole province, and several cities in the interior are supplied with it. They also export annually from eight to ten quintals of flour to Barquisimeto, Guanare, Saint Philippe, and Carraccas.

They manufacture from the wool of their sheep bed-coverlets, which they send to Maracaybo and Carthagena. They have also tanneries and manufactures of white leather, and like the inhabitants of Carora, they work up as many of their raw materials as possible, and dispose of the remainder. Another profitable branch of commerce carried on by the inhabitants of Tocuyo, is that of salt, which they bring from the salt-pits of Coro. Such is their activity, that they contrive to engross the exclusive sale of this article of the first necessity.

Tocuyo is computed to contain ten thousand two hundred in-

dividuals: the practice of suicide is extremely common amongst them. A creole of this city thinks nothing of cutting his throat or hanging himself. Once having imbibed a distaste for life, it becomes insupportable, and they throw it off with the same serenity that a man disencumbers himself of a heavy burden. This system of cowardice rather than courage, extravagance rather than philosophy, has, nevertheless, many advocates in this city.

Tocuyo is ninety leagues south-west of Carraccas, and twenty north of Truxillo.

In Guanare, which was founded in 1593, there are the same civil and religious institutions as in all the other cities of Terra Firma. Its situation is highly honourable to the taste of its founder. It stands on the bank of a river which affords excellent water for every domestic purpose, as well as for the irrigation of the adjoining fields, and drink for their flocks and herds; a pure air circulates in the city, so as greatly to moderate the heat of the atmosphere. To the west of this place, the soil is extremely fertile, and well adapted for every species of culture; and towards the south and east are immense plains, suited to the support of cattle of every description. It is to the rearing of animals that the inhabitants chiefly devote themselves. They supply the whole province with bullocks and mules, and transport the surplus to Coro, Porto-Cavello, or Guiana. Formerly they cultivated very excellent tobacco in the vallies of Tucupio, Sipororo, and upon the banks of the river Portugaise; but since the establishment of the exclusive trade in this article, these plantations have experienced the fate of all those found beyond the territory selected by the administration for the culture of this plant on account of the king.

The population of Guanare is estimated at twelve thousand three hundred souls. The streets are wide, and the houses, without being entitled to the appellation of elegant, are extremely neat. There is one hospital, the revenues of which are moderate; but the parish church is a large handsome structure. It owes a part of its splendour to the possession of our Lady of Comoroto, the fame of whose miracles attracts great multitudes of devotees from all the neighbouring provinces. This city is situated ninety-three leagues south-south-west from Carraccas, and twenty-four south-east from Truxillo.

The city of Araure was founded by the first Capuchin mission sent from Andalusia. Its situation is commanding, agreeable, and convenient. Three rivers water the surrounding territory, and contribute to enrich the soil; though it must be confessed the inhabitants do not always turn to avail themselves of the advantages of their situation, their chief and almost sole occupation being the breeding of cattle. They cultivate only cotton, and a

very little coffee. They are, however, extremely industrious. The city is regular, and its appearance on the whole agreeable. The houses are well built, but the streets are rather narrow; the church is an extremely handsome edifice.

Our Lady of the Corteza, or of the Ecorce, occupies the first place in this church. She not only enjoys the public veneration of all the faithful in Araure, but in the whole of the surrounding villages. Her miraculous appearance took place, acccording to tradition, in 1702, in the neighbourhood of the city. A mulatto woman, named Marguerite, going to perform her devotions at the shrine of our Lady of Cormoroto, fastened her beast to a tree. On unloosing it, she perceived upon the bark an image of the virgin, which she carefully cut out with her knife. On arriving at the village of Acasigua, she placed the image in the corner of her apartment, set before it a lighted candle, and began to address to it her prayers. A missionary Capuchin, named Michel Placentia, came into the house in order to learn the history of the image, which she immediately related to him; on which he earnestly requested that it might be put into his possession. This she refused to do, until he offered her in exchange a shrine, two prints of the Virgin, one of Rosaire, and another of the Conception. On this condition he was suffered to depart with our Lady of Ecorce, which he placed in the parish church of Araure, where she performed many wonderful miracles. She has never, however, attained to the same celebrity as our lady of Comoroto.

Calaboso is another city of a recent date: it was at first an Indian village, and afterwards enlarged by the Spaniards, from its being a convenient station for superintending their herds and flocks. The air is in this place excessively hot, although regularly moderated by a land breeze from the north-east. The lands in the vicinity of the town afford excellent pasturage for cattle, which are extremely numerous. For some time, however, either owing to an increased corruption of manners, or relaxation of vigilance on the part of the magistrate, this kind of property has become very insecure. Bands of robbers continually prowl about the plains situated between Calaboso and the river Guarapiche; they carry off great numbers of the cattle and mules, which they drive secretly to Guiana, or transport to the island of Trinidad. They frequently kill even the cattle on the spot for the sake of their skins.

The city of Calaboso stands between two rivers, the one named Guarico, to the west, and the other, termed Orituco, to the east; but it is much nearer the former than the latter. These two rivers run from north to south, and join each other at about five leagues below Calaboso; twenty leagues further on, they flow

into the river of Apure, which empties itself into the Oroonoko. During the rainy season, the two first rivers overflow their banks, which greatly incommodes the inhabitants of Calaboso. Every kind of labour is then necessarily suspended; their herds and flocks seek refuge in the heights, where they remain until the waters have subsided.

The streets and houses of Calaboso form on the whole a very pleasant prospect; the church is a plain and simple edifice. In 1786, Calaboso and its five subordinate villages were reckoned to contain five hundred and forty-nine houses, and eighty whites, eleven hundred and eighty-six free Indians, three thousand three hundred persons of colour, nine hundred and forty-three slaves, a hundred and sixteen plantations of different kinds, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-two mules, twenty-six thousand five hundred and fifty-two horses, and sixty-seven thousand four hundred and fifty-seven oxen and cows. At present, 1804, the population of Calaboso amounts to four thousand eight hundred persons. It is situated fifty-two leagues south from Carraccas, and nearly at an equal distance north from the river Oroonoko.

The city of San-Juan-Baustista-Del-Pao is regularly laid out, and contains about five thousand five hundred individuals. The parish church is more striking for its neatness and simplicity, than for the elegance of its architecture. The heat would be almost insupportable at San-Juan were it not frequently moderated by brisk north-east winds: it is, however, remarkably healthy. Wholly exempted from all pestilential maladies, the inhabitants are unacquainted with any diseases, except those to which man is subject in whatever quarter of the globe he may reside.

The river passes on the east of the city, and runs in a direction from north to south. It discharged its waters formerly into the lake of Valence; but in consequence of one of those revolutions which frequently occur in the progress of time, it has now taken its present direction. During its course it becomes greatly augmented by a succession of tributary streams, with which it swells the river Apure in its turn, and at last empties itself into the Oroonoko.

The new direction which the river Pao has taken, might easily be rendered available to the opening of a direct communication between Valence and the Oroonoko, across a space of one hundred leagues. Nothing seems wanting to establish this inland navigation, but to hollow out and deepen the bed of the river Pao for ten or twelve leagues near its source. The advantages which commerce would derive from such a communication are incalculable; since by this means, during war in particular, the necessary relations might be maintained between the province of Venezuela and Guiana, in spite of all the efforts of the enemy's

cruisers to counteract them. It requires no great stretch of ability to perceive that by this passage, which no enemy could shut, ready succours could be at all times afforded to Guiana in case of its being threatened with an attack.

The distance of this city from Caracas, to the south-west side of which it lies, is fifty leagues.

The city of Saint Louis de Cura is situated in a valley formed by rocky mountains of a very grotesque appearance. This valley is extremely fertile, and yields abundant crops, but by far the greatest part of it is appropriated to grazing. The temperature is here hot, and the atmosphere dry. The soil, which is of a reddish argill, becomes extremely heavy and tenacious during the rainy weather. The water used for domestic purposes, although wholesome, is not very limpid. The inhabitants of this city amount to four thousand, and are governed by a cabildo. The parish church, hitherto little famed, has now acquired a degree of celebrity, which future ages will find it difficult to destroy. It arose from miracles said to have been performed by our Lady of Valencianos.

This virgin was found in a ravine of the same name, by an aged Indian, who immediately carried her to his hut, and exhibited her to the veneration of the faithful. This image, with no other light than that of a wretched candle, and without any other shelter than a straw roof, performed as many miracles as if she had occupied a magnificent palace. No sooner was the curé informed of this circumstance, than he repaired to the house of the old Indian, and peremptorily insisted that the virgin should be delivered up to him, in order that he might place her in the church. The Indian at first refused to resign so inestimable a treasure; but at last the influence of the curé prevailed, and the virgin was carried in procession to the church, and placed in a situation worthy of her dignity.

The report was soon spread throughout the province; the people flocked from all quarters; donations were liberally poured in, and the virgin every day received fresh jewels in return for the favours conferred by her. Such presents greatly augmented the casual perquisites of the curé. In short, every thing appeared in a prosperous train, when the jealousy or piety of the curé of Saint Sebastian de los Reyes dissipated this flattering prospect. He insisted that the virgin ought in justice to be given up to him, in as much as the ravine of los Valenciamos, in which she had been found, being within the boundaries of his parish, it was indisputable that she appertained to his church. The curé of Saint-Louis de Cura urged still more weighty arguments in support of his right than those adduced by his opponent. A law-suit immediately commenced, the litigants were animated

with equal fury against each other, and equally eager to prove the superiority of their claim to the possession of the virgin.

The bishop of Carraccas, who was greatly perplexed how to decide this singular question, commanded that the virgin, the source of the litigation, should be transferred to Carraccas, and lodged in the episcopal palace, where she was allowed quietly to remain until his death. At last, in 1802, the bishop of Francisco Ibarra, a prelate possessed of every moral and religious virtue, proposed to the new curé of Saint Sebastian de los Reyes to desist from the pretensions of his predecessor, and suffer the virgin to be returned to the curé of Saint-Louis de Cura. The affair terminated according to the pacific wishes of the venerable bishop. The process was extinguished, discord ceased, and our Lady of los Valencianos returned in triumph to Saint-Louis de Cura, after an absence of thirty years.

The city of Saint-Louis de Cura is twenty-two leagues south-west from Carraccas, and eight leagues south-east from the lake of Valence.

The city of Saint-Sebastien de los Reyes was founded in the sixteenth century, and consequently had from its origin a cabildo and a curé. Though the soil in this district be fitted to receive any species of crop, the inhabitants have hitherto confined themselves to the culture of maize, placing their chief dependance on the possession of numerous flocks and herds of cattle.

The city upon the whole is not handsome, and evidently bears the marks of its early origin. Its situation is agreeable, though a residence in it be far from desirable, on account of the intense heat which prevails, and which is very little moderated by a constant breeze from the north-east. The water is here muddy, but in great abundance. Besides the parish church, there is only one hospital, which is of little importance. The inhabitants amount to three thousand five hundred.

This city is eighteen leagues south-west from Carraccas.

The city of Saint Philippe, which is at present so remarkable for the activity and industry of its inhabitants, was formerly a wretched village, known under the name of Cocorote. Its population, which amounts to six thousand eight hundred persons, is chiefly composed of individuals from Barquisimeto, and Spaniards from the Canaries. The soil around this place is remarkable for its fertility: to the east flows the river Yarani, and to the west that of Arva; the ground is intersected in every direction by small streams and ravines, and being alternatively exposed to abundant rains and extreme heat, is covered with perpetual verdure. The inhabitants cultivate cocoa, indigo, coffee, a little cotton, and a very few sugar-canes. The uncommon richness of the soil greatly contributed to draw the city of Saint-Phi-

lipe from its original obscurity ; and the company of Guipuscoa completed the work, by making choice of this place to establish magazines of goods, for which there was any demand in the interior, as well as for those they received in return. Saint Philippe is regularly built ; the streets are wide, and run at right angles with each other; and the parish church is a neat handsome edifice. A cabildo is entrusted with the execution of the municipal laws, and the administration of justice. The atmosphere is here extremely warm and humid, which consequently renders this city unhealthy. It is affirmed, however, that syphilitic maladies are more common than any other.

Saint-Philippe stands fifty leagues west from Carraccas, fifteen leagues north-west from Valence, and seven leagues north-west from Nirgua. This last city, one of the first that was founded in the province of Venezuela, was built on account of the mines discovered in the vicinity of its site, but which were, as has been already related, never rendered productive. The surrounding lands are fertile, but the air is extremely unwholesome. Even the natives themselves are frequently attacked by acute diseases, which for the most part terminate fatally. Many of the whites who formerly inhabited this city, have abandoned it, as they conceived they could no longer enjoy tranquillity ; after that the Sambos, in return for services rendered to the king, obtained from him the *appellation of his faithful and loyal subjects.*

All the places in the cabildo, or municipality, are filled by Sambos. The lieutenant of justice, who is nominated by the governor, is the only white holding any office in this city.

Nirgua exhibits all the symptoms of decline. The houses are rapidly falling into a state of dilapidation, without any effort to counteract it. Its population is calculated at three thousand two hundred persons.

A Sambo is the offspring of a negress with an Indian, or of a negro with an Indian woman. In colour he nearly resembles the child of a mulatto by a negress. The Sambo is well formed, muscular, and capable of supporting great fatigue ; but unfortunately his mind has a strong bias to vice of every kind. The word Sambo signifies in the language of the country every thing despicable and worthless, a knave, a drone, a drunkard, a cheat, a robber, and even an assassin. Of ten crimes committed in this district, eight are chargeable on this villanous and accursed race. Their immorality is peculiar to themselves; for it is never perceived to prevail to the same degree either among negroes, mulattoes, or any other race pure or mixed. A phenomenon which frequently struck me is that the children of a white with an Indian, whose colour is of a pale white, are all delicate, agreeable, good, docile, and that increasing years, far from de-

stroying these qualities, tend, on the contrary, to render them more obvious.

The city of Nirgua is situated forty-eight leagues from Carraccas.

The city of San-Carlos owes its foundation to the first missionaries of Venezuela, and its increasing size and beauty, to the industry and activity of the inhabitants. The chief part of the white population of this place is composed of Spaniards from the Canaries; and as they left their native country expressly with the design of meliorating their fortune, they brought along with them that spirit of perseverance and enterprise which is necessary to attain the object they had in view. Their example communicated, even to the creoles, a spirit of emulation, which tended still farther to increase the public prosperity. Oxen, horses, and mules, which they possess in abundance, constitute the principal part of their wealth. Agriculture is not, however, wholly neglected by them: they raise indigo and coffee in considerable quantities; the quality of the soil gives an exquisite flavour to their fruits, especially to the oranges, which are much famed for excellence throughout the province.

The city is large, handsome and well laid out; the inhabitants amount to nine thousand five hundred. The parish church, by its construction, and the liberal manner in which it is endowed, reflects honour on the industrious activity and piety of the parishioners.

The heat experienced at San-Carlos is intense, and would be nearly insupportable, were it not partly moderated by the violence of the north-east wind.

San Carlos stands sixty leagues south-west from Carraccas, twenty-four south-south-west from Valence, and twenty from Saint Philippe.

The government of Cumana comprehends two provinces, the one termed Cumana, and the other Barcelona. It is not well known how Barcelona obtained the title of a province, since it never had any appropriate governor, and from the time of its conquest by the Spaniards, has constantly made a part of the government of Cumana.

The government of Cumana is bounded towards the north and east by the sea, to the west by the river Unare, and to the south by the Oroonoko, except in those parts where the left bank of this river is inhabited. The jurisdiction of the governor of Guiana extends to within a cannon-shot of the establishments situated to the north of Oroonoko.

From the river Unare, to the city of Cumana, the land is sufficiently fertile; but from the promontory of Araya, for the distance of twenty to twenty-five leagues more towards the east,

the coast is arid, sandy, and steril. That part of the province which borders the Oroonoko is only fit for pasturing cattle, and is appropriated by the inhabitants to this purpose alone.

The rest of the ground is extremely fertile; the plains, the vallies, and the hillocks, are covered with the most luxuriant verdure, and the most abundant crops: but what must appear truly surprising in this delightful region, neither the tygers, caymens, nor even the apes, betray the smallest terror on the approach of man. The most valuable trees, such as the guiacum, brasil, and logwood, &c. are found even on the coast of Paria itself; and the woods abound with rare and beautiful birds.

In the interior of the province are several lofty mountains, the highest of which, Tumeriquiri, is nine hundred and thirty-five toises above the level of the sea.

In this mountain is situated the cavern of Guacharo, which is so celebrated among the Indians. It is very extensive, and serves as a habitation to an immense number of nocturnal birds, especially a new species of the *caprimulgus*, *Lin.* from the fat of which is procured the oil of Guacharo. Its situation is commanding, and ornamented by the most luxuriant vegetation. From this cavern issues a river of considerable size, and in the interior is heard the doleful cry of the birds, which the Indians attribute to the souls of the deceased, which, according to them, must of necessity pass through this place in order to enter the other world. This privilege they immediately obtain when their conduct has been irreproachable throughout life. In the contrary case, they are confined for a longer or shorter time in the cavern, according to the magnitude of their offences. It is this dark and dreary abode that forces from them those groans and lamentations which are heard without.

The Indians are so fully persuaded of the truth of this tradition, which has been handed down to them from time immemorial, that immediately on the death of any of their relations or friends, they repair to the mouth of the cavern, in order to ascertain whether their souls have encountered any obstacles, or been allowed to pass. When they cannot distinguish their voices, they retire overwhelmed with joy, and celebrate the event by ebriety and dances characteristic of their happiness; but when, on the contrary, they conceive the voice of the defunct is heard, they hurry away to drown their sorrow in intoxicating draughts, accompanied by dances calculated to mark their despair. Thus whatever be the fate of the defunct's soul, they give themselves up to the same excesses, making no difference but in the nature of the dance.

All the Indian tribes of Cumana, as well as those inhabiting the banks of the Oroonoko, who are not converted to christ-

anity, and even many others who pretend to be so, are as fully convinced as their forefathers, of the truth of this tradition. It appears even that this fable, is not, like many others of a similiar kind, the offspring of fraud or fanaticism; for it is not accompanied by any religious ceremony which could prove productive of emolument to the inventor. Neither does the cavern itself display any monument of that sway which imposture exercises over the minds of the credulous. This tradition seems therefore to have originated merely from the influence of fear on the mind, which is ever fertile in creating phantoms, and in devising expedients to sooth its imaginary terrors. Among the Indians who live even at the distance of two hundred leagues from this cavern, to *descend to Guacharo* is synonymous with *to die*.

The principal establishment dependent on Cumana, such as Barcelona, Piritu, Clarinas, &c. Twelve leagues to the south-east of Cumana lies the valley of Cumanacoa, wherein much tobacco is cultivated for the behoof of the king. Its soil appears to be well calculated for this species of production, as the tobacco raised thereon is considered in the country as much superior to that produced in any other part of Terra-Firma. In the environs of Cumanacoa are situated the Indian villages, San-Fernando, Arenas, Aricagua. The land adjoining to them is extremely fertile, but uncultivated. Farther in the interior lie the vallies of Carépe, Guanaguana, Cocoyar, &c. which, though equally fertile, as the land above mentioned, also remain in a state of nature.

All the settlements on the banks of the gulph of Paria, from the mouth of the river Guarapiche, to the most northern mouth of the Oroonoko, are in a prosperous state. Since the English took possession of Trinidad in 1797, the villages of Guiria and Guinima have been formed by French and Spanish refugees from that island. The rapid progress of agriculture, during this short interval, renders it presumable that this district will in a few years become the most productive part of the province. It must be admitted that the vicinity of Trinidad since it has been in possession of the English, holds out greater inducements to the cultivator to proceed in his improvements on the coast of Paria, than any where else. Besides obtaining at a reasonable rate, and often on credit, all the implements and apparatus necessary to the success of his establishment, he disposes of his commodities on the spot free of duty, and with little expence for freight, at prices greatly exceeding those which he could procure for them in the Spanish ports. Whether government ought to tolerate this clandestine trade, which, in fact, is only a slight evil when compared with the advantages of which it is

productive to the province, or to adopt measures suited to counteract it, is a question which, it must be confessed, it is not very easy to resolve. But it appears to me that it would be bad policy to interfere with it, until that these settlements be so far advanced in improvement, as to attract to themselves the commerce of the mother country.

Cumana is intersected in all directions by ravines, brooks, and rivers, equally applicable to irrigation, to the erection of water-mills, and to navigation. It has been already mentioned that the rivers Neveri and Mansanares, which discharge their waters into the sea towards the north, run but a very short way, and are of inconsiderable magnitude; while those which flow towards the east, and into the gulph of Paria, traverse a much greater extent of country. Some of these rivers, such as Colorado, Guatatar, Caripe, Punceres, Tigre, Guayuta, &c. empty themselves into the Guarapiche, which is navigable for twenty-five leagues from the sea; others pursue a southerly direction, and after watering the province, discharge their waters into the Oroonoko.

According to convenience, goods may be sent either by the way of Barcelona and Cumana, by the gulph of Paria, or by the Oroonoko.

What rapid improvement might not be made in a country so favoured by nature, and which contains a population of eighty thousand persons, exclusive of the Indian tribes not yet finally subjected, and who still continue to exercise the zeal and patience of the missionaries!

Spain ought to derive greater commercial advantages from the province of Cumana alone than from all its other possessions, because there are few countries that unite to an uncommon richnes of soil, such a facility, from local situation, for inland and foreign navigation. The city of Cumana, is situated within a quarter of a league of the sea, upon a dry and sandy soil. It lies 10° 37′ 37″ N. lat.; and 66° 30′ W. long. calculating from the meridian of Paris. Reaumur's thermometer usually indicates in July during the day 23°, and 19° in the night.

Maximum	27
Minimum	17

The elevation of the city is fifty-three feet above the level of of the sea. In July the hygrometer of Deluc usually marks from 50 to 53° of humidity.

Maximum	66
Minimum	46

According to the cyanometre of Saussure, there are here 24½° of blue in the sky, while at Carraccas there is but 18°, and in Europe generally only 14°.

The seat of the government of the two provinces is in the city of Cumana. The governor, who is nominated for five years, is at the same time vice-patron; in which capacity he appoints to the vacant cures, and indeed to all places connected with public worship, of which the patronage is vested in the crown of Spain. As sub-delegate of the intendant, he is entrusted with the administration of the finances of his district; he superintends the receipt of the taxes, obviates any doubts which may occur, regulates the payment of the ordinary expences, and receives the accounts of the officers of the administration: but his power is subordinate to the captain-general of Carraccas, in whatever respects the political relations with foreign colonies, as well as the military department; he is also accountable to the intendant in the financial and commercial departments. The governor of Cumana, D. Vicente Emparan, a native of Biscay, took upon himself, however, during the continuance of the war of 1793 and 1801, to permit the entrance of neutral ships into the ports of his government, notwithstanding an express order to the contrary. By this prudent conduct, his department experienced no scarcity, while all the rest of Terra-Firma laboured under a want of every thing, except dry goods, with which the English supplied them. Hence this war, which would have otherwise proved ruinous to the provinces of Cumana and Barcelona, operated, on the contrary, rather as a benefit, which must for ever endear to the inhabitants, the name of a governor who had the courage to hazard the reproaches of his majesty, for the good of the country committed to his charge. His catholic majecty, so far, however, from blaming the conduct of the governor, bestowed on him the highest praise, and allowed him to retire in 1804, with the whole of the salary as governor of Cumana.

Towards the north of the city of Cumana lies the gulf of Cariaco, which has been already mentioned. The river Mansanares, which separates the city on the south, from the suburbs inhabited by the Guayqueris Indians, bounds it on the south and west. The water of this river is that alone which is drank by the inhabitants. Though often not limpid, it is yet reckoned very wholesome.

Cumana is extremely healthy, notwithstanding the great heat of the atmosphere. The sea breeze, however, which blows very regularly during a great part of the day, contributes much to moderate the intense heat of the sun. But in order to enjoy this breeze, it is frequently necessary to ascend a morne rising behind the city and stretching towards the east. A single fort, erected upon this eminence, constitutes the sole defence of Cu-

mana; the garrison of which consists of two hundred and thirty troops of the line, and a company of artillery. During war, this force is augmented by calling out the militia.

At Cumana, there is only a single parish church, which stands on the south-east side of the city, near to a dilapidated fort. There are also two convents, one of which belongs to the order of Saint Dominic, and the other to that of Saint Francis.

The inhabitants are reckoned at twenty-four thousand. Its augmentation has been so rapid, that they have of late been forced to build on the left bank of the river Mansanares, to the west of the village Guayqueris. These new buildings already constitute a populous village, which communicates with the city by means of a bridge. To the first street the inhabitants gave the name of Emparan, in honour of the governor who contributed so much to promote their interest.

All the houses in Cumana are low and superficially built. The frequent earthquakes which it has experienced for ten years, have constrained the inhabitants to attend more to their personal safety, than to elegance and beauty in the construction of their houses. The violent shocks which occurred during the month of December, 1797, overturned nearly all the houses built with stone, and rendered uninhabitable those which remained. The earthquake which was felt in the month of November, 1799, occasioned a variation of the needle of 45′.

According to the opinion of Humboldt, Cumana must be exposed to frequent earthquakes by the proximity of the gulph of Cariaco, which appears to have some communication with the volcanoes of Cumucuta, from which are rejected hydrogen gas, and hot and sulphureous waters. It is worthy of being remarked, that earthquakes occur most frequently after rains, and that then the caverns of Cuchivano emit an inflammable gas, which, during the night, may be seen burning at the height of one hundred toises.

The population of Cumana mostly consists of white creoles, who generally evince much goodness of disposition. They uniformly display a warm attachment to their natal soil, and for the most part pursue the same occupation as their fathers. Some engage in agriculture; while many others procure a competency by entering into trade, or by adopting a sea-faring life, &c. A great proportion of the fish caught on the shores of Cumana, is salted and sent to Carraccas, and the other cities of these provinces, as well as to the islands situated to leeward; from which they import in return, implements of agriculture, provisions of different kinds, and contraband goods. The cargoes are generally of trifling value, and they content themselves with very moderate profits, but which they endeavour to enhance by making

frequent voyages. A capital of from 4000 to 5000 piastres, which in any other place would be wholly insufficient to undertake any commercial speculation, here serves to maintain five or six families.

The creoles of Cumana, who devote themselves to literary pursuits, are characterized by their penetration, judgment, and application. We do not, indeed, see among them, that quickness of perception which marks the creoles of Maracaybo; but they on the other hand more than compensate for this deficiency, by a greater portion of solidity and good sense.

Trade, whether in retail, or on a large scale, is carried on at Cumana by Catalonians, and natives of the Canary islands.

Among the different productions exported by the merchants of Cumana, cocoa, and the oil expressed from it, deserves particularly to be mentioned. Various medicinal plants, which grow in the country, might also find a ready market, if the inhabitants possessed any knowledge of their virtues, and knew how to prepare them.

Cumanacoa is situated fourteen leagues south-east from Cumana, in the middle of a valley of the same name. It is reckoned to contain four thousand two hundred individuals. Nothing appears wanting to render this city flourishing, but a sufficient degree of energy in the inhabitants to avail themselves of the uncommon fertility of the soil by which it is surrounded. The fruits possess a flavour, taste, and mellowness, which they are rarely found to have in other places.

The government gave to this city the name of San-Baltasar de Los-Arias, but it is much better known under that of Cumanacoa.

The city Cariaco, which is situated upon a river bearing the same name, is designated in the archives of government, under the name of San-Philippo de Austria. It contains only about six or seven thousand inhabitants, but is in a very flourishing condition. The staple production is cotton, which far surpasses in beauty that raised in any other part of Terra-Firma. Its territory alone furnishes annually more than 3000 quintals. Its inhabitants also cultivate cocoa and the sugar cane.

New Barcelona, which was founded in 1634, by D. Juan Urpin, is situated in a plain upon the left bank of the river Neveri, at a league from its mouth. Its population amounts to fourteen thousand inhabitants; besides one parish church, there is also a convent of Franciscans, the structure of which is neither elegant nor handsome. Its streets which remain unpaved, are remarkably dirty during the rainy season, and in dry weather are so covered with dust, as to prove extremely incommodious. From the prodigious number of hogs which are

reared by the inhabitants, such a quantity of filth is accumulated, as to vitiate the air, and frequently engender pestilential maladies. The cabildo or municipality, whose principal function it is to watch over the health of the city, views with perfect indifference, and takes no measures to correct this evil; though he himself be equally exposed as the rest of the inhabitants to suffer from the noxious miasmata which exhale from such nuisances. I have, however, been since informed, that M. Cagigal, the commandant of the place, towards the end of 1803, adopted such measures as were calculated to obviate this evil.

The city of Barcelona was first peopled by emigrants from Christophe and Cumanagoto. Agriculture is very much neglected, not only in the immediate vicinity of the city, but in the surrounding country. Among the best cultivated vallies, those of Capirimal and Brigantin are the most conspicuous. There are many others not less fertile, but which from want of culture, do not produce, taken altogether, more than three thousand quintals of cocoa, and a very inconsiderable quantity of cotton. The slaves in this district are far from being numerous. It is estimated that there is not above two thousand upon an extent of territory, the cultivation of which might fully occupy six hundred thousand; besides, the one half of those two thousand are employed as domestics.

The rich pastures, with which the immense plains dependant on Barcelona are covered, have induced the inhabitants to direct their attention principally to the rearing of cattle. Besides the live cattle which they dispose of in the country, or for exportation, prodigious numbers are slaughtered, the flesh of which, when cured, they regularly export to the adjacent isles, as well as to the Havannah, and sell it at a hundred per cent profit. The tallow and hides form another of their staple articles of commerce. At present, this source of profit is considerably diminished by the frequent depredations committed among the cattle, by people who make a trade of carrying them off in such great numbers, as scarcely to leave sufficient to supply the home consumption.

The population is composed of nearly an equal proportion of whites and people of colour; these latter here, as every where else, are far from being industrious agriculturists. Among the whites, there are some Catalonians, who devote themselves exclusively to commerce; but their speculations are chiefly confined to prohibited articles. Their frequent expeditions to Trinidad are seldom undertaken with any other view than that of bringing back contraband goods, which are deposited at Barcelona, and afterwards sent into the provinces either by land or water. The

money annually sent from Barcelona to carry on this clandestine traffic, is computed to amount to 400,000 piastres.

Barcelona is two leagues distant from Cumana by water; but the roads are in such a wretched state, that they reckon the distance by land equivalent to twenty.

Conception del Pao must not be confounded with Saint-Jean-Baptiste del Pao, which is situated in the province of Venezuela. Its inhabitants, who amount to between two and three thousand, are enabled from the extreme fertility of the soil, to live in very easy circumstances. The air is good, and there is abundance of excellent water; the only inconvenience to which the inhabitants are subjected, proceeds from the great heats, and the inundations produced by the long and heavy rains. It is distant about forty-five leagues from Barcelona, fifty-five from Cumana, and nearly eighty south-east from Carraccas.

The island of Marguerite, which is situated in 10° 56′ lat. and between the 66th and the 67th degree of lon. west from the meridian of Paris, has been long celebrated for its pearl fishery, from which it obtained its present appellation. It lies to the north of Terra-Firma, from which it is only separated by an arm of the sea, about eight leagues in breadth. The productions of this island are of very little importance; it is chiefly valuable as a commercial and military station: since being divided from the continent only by a narrow strait, and lying to windward of Terra-Firma, it might be rendered, under a judicious system, a convenient store-house for Cumana, Barcelona, Carraccas, Goayre, and all the cities of the interior. The island of Trinidad, though less favourably situated for this purpose, yet carries on a contraband traffic to a prodigious extent; which would necessarily be confined to Guiana, if the inhabitants of the eastern part of Terra-Firma could procure at Marguerite, at a cheaper rate, those articles which they are at present obliged to purchase at a greater distance.

Besides these advantages, there are others arising from the possession of Marguerite, which are not less important. We have already mentioned the channel which separates this island from the main land; this channel is not, however, navigable through its whole extent. The Isle de Coche, which lies in the middle, leaves for ships only a very narrow passage, about two leagues in breadth, through which they must necessarily pass. All ships coming from Europe to Cumana, Barcelona, and even to Goayre, must leave Marguerite on the south. If this island should ever come into the possession of the enemies of Spain, all intercourse, not only with Europe, but with the adjacent islands, would be interrupted; because those vessels, which should avoid the channel, would be inevitably taken by the privateers,

to which Marguerite would afford an asylum. The possession of Marguerite would at all times enable an enterprising enemy to fit out expeditions against any part of Terra-Firma which it might wish to invade.

For these and various other reasons, it is the interest of Spain to retain possession of this island; not because she can derive any direct advantages from it, but because she would suffer great injury from its falling under the dominion of any other power.

Throughout the coast of Marguerite, there are only three ports or harbours. Of these the first and the principal is Pampatar, which lies east-south-east; the second, called Pueblo de la Mar, is about a league to leeward of the former; and the third, known under the name of Pueblo del Norte, is situated on the northern side of the island. Near to Pampatar are erected all the fortifications, supposed to be necessary for the defence of the island.

The city of Assumption, which is the capital of Marguerite, stands nearly in the centre of the island. Its population consists of five thousand five hundred whites, two thousand Indians, and six thousand five hundred slaves and free men of colour, making in all fourteen thousand persons. Its principal riches are derived from the fisheries established at the isle of Coche. They are carried on by the Indians of Marguerite, who engage in this employment during three months of the year, for the small pittance of a single real a day each, and a loaf of bread made of maize or Indian corn, which constitute their whole subsistence. In 1803, five individuals belonging to Marguerite, farmed these fisheries, which proved extremely productive, yielding much turtle, and an immense quantity of fish, which after being cured, they sold on the continent, and in the neighbouring islands.

They fabricate at Marguerite, hammocks of cotton, the texture of which is far superior to that of any other made in South America. Cotton stockings of an extreme fineness are likewise manufactured in this island; but they are excessively dear, and rather regarded as articles of luxury than of real utility.

Parrots and other curious birds are so abundant in the island, that every ship which touches at it carries off great numbers of them. Many of the poor inhabitants besides find a considerable resource from the turkeys and other poultry which they rear, and dispose of in the neighbouring islands.

As less vigilance is employed at Marguerite than in many other of the Spanish settlements, to prevent contraband traffic, the inhabitants avail themselves of this circumstance to import mules from Terra-Firma as if on their own account, but which they afterwards furtively export to foreign colonies.

Maracaybo is the capital of an extensive district of the same

name. This district is of very little extent from east to west; but it extends for more than one hundred leagues towards the south, on which side it is bounded by the kingdom of Santa Fè. The territory of Rio-de-la-Hache, which is dependent on the kingdom of New Grenada, bounds it on the west; the sea on the north; and the province of Venezuela, according to the new division, on the east.

The territory of Maracaybo is steril and unproductive even to a considerable distance from the capital: the whole east side of the lake is uninhabited, being arid and insalubrious, and covered with Indian fig-trees and thorny shrubs of different kinds; while on the west side, the land is fertile for more than twenty-five leagues to the south of the city. The country which lies on the south side of the lake, may vie, in point of fertility, with the richest spots in all South America. Nothing is wanting but exertion and industry, to render this a flourishing province, and to enable it to export annually commodities sufficient to load two thousand vessels, each of three hundred tons burden.

The city of Maracaybo is situated upon the left bank of a lake of the same name, and at about sixty leagues distant from the sea. The soil, in its immediate vicinity, is sandy, and wholly destitute of vegetable mould. Its temperature is so much hotter as the land breezes are faint, and far from being regular, as the ground is not watered by any running stream, and as rains fall very seldom. From the month of March to that of October, the heat is excessive; but during July and August, it is so insupportable, that the air seems as if it issued from an oven or furnace. The only effectual means to obviate the effects of this extreme heat, is to bathe frequently in the lake; a practice very common among the inhabitants. Maracaybo is, however, very healthy, and endemic maladies are unknown. Individuals, when once accustomed to the climate, enjoy, to the full, as good health as in many other countries where the heat is much less excessive.

The trade winds usually blow from March to the latter end of June, or the beginning of July. During the months of August and September, calms generally prevail, unless when interrupted by a south wind, which, in the vernacular language of the country, is called *virason*, on account of its insalubrity. It is remarked, that when the land breezes are moderate, the year is rainy; and that when they are violent, drought invariably follows. At Maracaybo, storms and tempests frequently occur. There thunder-storms are dreadful; and not unfrequently are ships, houses, &c. set on fire and consumed by the lightning on such occasions. They never, however, experience any of those tremendous hurricanes which are so frequent in the Antilles. Dreadful and de-

structive as the tempests are, to which Maracaybo is subject, the inhabitants think their occurrance fortunate, as they tend, in their opinion, to prevent earthquakes. The rains which fall during these storms, are so copious that they produce torrents, which, running through Maracaybo with irresistible fury, carry along with them every thing that impedes their passage. Fortunately, these storms are seldom of long duration. The principal part of the city is situated on the borders of a small gulf or bay, nearly a league in extent, which forms the lake towards the west. The other part of the city lies to the north, on a neck or opening of the lake, which, at this place, is only three leagues in extent, but which afterwards swells out towards the south. The point where the city begins, is called the promontory of Maracaybo; and that where the gulf originates, is termed the promontory of Arrieta, situated nearly opposite that of St. Lucia.

Many of the houses at Maracaybo, are built with lime and sand, and with much taste; but, notwithstanding the abundance of wood and the cheapness of tiles—notwithstanding the frequency of fires, by which often entire streets are consumed, many of the inhabitants still continue to cover the roofs of their houses with reeds instead of tiles; which, in their opinion, render them more susceptible of taking fire. The species of reed which they employ for this purpose, is called, by the Spaniards, *enéa*, and grows in great abundance on the borders of the lake. This intermixture of houses covered with reeds, gives to the city the appearance of a mean village; and tends greatly, when fires occur, to increase their activity. Some of the inhabitants are so much under the influence of this prejudice, that, although in affluent circumstances, they construct their houses entirely of reeds, and similar materials.

As there is no other water except that of the lake, the inhabitants are forced to use it, although somewhat disagreeable to the taste; its quality, however, is not bad, excepting only during the fresh gales which blow in spring, when it becomes brackish. In that case, the poor supply themselves with this necessary article, by digging pits in the ground; but the water thus obtained, is neither pleasant nor very wholesome. The rich obviate this inconveniency by having cisterns constructed in their houses for the purpose of collecting rain-water.

The inhabitants of Maracaybo, according to a census taken in 1801, amounted to twenty-two thousand souls: since that period, the population has been greatly augmented by Spanish refugees from the island of St. Domingo. The habit, which the citizens acquire at an early age, of sailing on the lake, whether for pleasure, fishing, or other business, gives them a predi-

lection for the sea, and induces them to repair in great numbers to Porto-Cavello, Goayre, &c. in order to procure employment, and gratify their ambition. They perform coasting, or long voyages, with equal facility; and when all trade is suspended by the operation of war, they enter privateers. Bred up in the neighbourhood of the lake, they are mostly all expert swimmers and excellent divers. Their reputation stands equally high as soldiers. Those who do not enter into the sea service, form plantations, or assist in cultivating those which belong to their fathers. Nothing proves better their aptitude for this kind of occupation, than the immense flocks of cattle with which the savannas of Maracaybo are covered.

But what confers the greatest honour on the inhabitants of Maracaybo, is their application to literature; in which, notwithstanding the wretched state of public education, they make considerable progress. While the business of instruction was committed to the Jesuits, many of their pupils acquired such a degree of proficiency in the Latin language, as to be able to speak it with equal elegance and simplicity. They likewise acquired the art of elocution, and of writing their mother tongue with the greatest purity; in a word, they possessed all the qualities which characterise men of letters. But from the period of the expulsion of those learned men, education has declined at Maracaybo. Lawyers are a great pest at Maracaybo, for they tend to foment discord, and frequently contrive to render causes, which might be easily settled, endless and ruinous to both parties. The penal laws which the legislature has enacted in order to diminish the number of petty-fogging attornies, termed, by the inhabitants *pendolistas*, sufficiently prove the magnitude of the evil.

After allowing that the inhabitants of this city possess activity, genius, and courage, we have nothing farther to say in their praise. They are accused of violating their promises, and even of attempting to break through written engagements. Their character, in this respect, is so notorious, that every stranger whom business induces to visit Maracaybo, affirms, that it would be much better to enter into commercial speculations with the women, because they appear alone to possess that sincerity and good sense which are every where else considered as belonging particularly to man.

While speaking of women, it would be unpardonable not to mention that the females of Maracaybo, whether in the single or married state, conduct themselves with decorum and propriety. After marriage, all their attention and care are exclusively devoted to their husbands, the management of his household, and the education of their children. What constitutes the chief of

their amusements, is music; in particular, so much are they attached to the harp, that there is scarcely a house in which the harmonious sounds of that instrument may not be heard every evening, and especially on holidays. There is only a single parish church in this city, to which is attached a chapel of ease, called San-Juan de Dois.

Maracaybo is the residence of a governor, who is invested with the same powers, and receives the same salary, as the governor of Cumana. It is situated in 10° 30′ lat. and 74° 6′ lon. west from the meridian of Paris: it is distant from Carraccas about a hundred and forty leagues. The city of Merida, which was founded in 1558, by Rodriguez Suarez, under the name of Santiago de Los Caballeros, is situated in a valley, three leagues in length, and about three quarters of a league in its greatest breadth. It is encompassed by three rivers; the first of which is called Mucujan, and derives its origin from a district termed in the country, *los Paramos de los Conejos*. It flows from north to south, and enters the city by its eastern extremity: the second of these rivers, known by the name of Albarregas, pursues a north-westerly course, and passes to the west of the city: the third, which is termed Chama, and whose source lies eastward, leaving Merida to the south, runs in a northerly direction till it empties itself into the lake of Maracaybo. The two former of these rivers flow into the Chama near Merida, by the influx of which, as well as many other tributary streams, it is successively augmented, and at last acquires the magnitude of a large river. Over each of these three rivers, a strong wooden bridge has been thrown; so that they may be passed, at all seasons, either on foot or horseback. None of these rivers are navigable, by reason of the rapidity of their currents, and various obstacles, such as immense masses of rocks and mountains, which frequently so nearly approach each other as to contract the bed of the river, and form cascades, precluding the passage even of the smallest vessels, without incurring the danger of being dashed to pieces. These difficulties might perhaps have been surmounted, had not the extreme unhealthiness of the country, lying near that part of the lake into which the river Chama empties itself, hitherto prevented it. So unhealthy, indeed, is this spot, that if any person remains on it for only two hours, he seldom escapes a fever of the most malignant kind, which quickly terminates in death.

The rivers which water the environs of Merida, tend greatly to promote the success of agricultural operations; and it must be acknowledged, to the praise of the inhabitants, that they avail themselves of this advantage. At some distance from the city, they cultivate the sugar-cane, cocoa, and coffee; the quality of which is greatly superior to the same commodities produced in

other parts of the province. Besides a profusion of different fruits, there are also raised, in the vicinity of Merida, maize, beans, and peas, of various species; potatoes, cassada, wheat, barley, &c. All these articles are consumed on the spot, and are in such abundance, that even the most indigent are always enabled to procure for themselves more than enough for their subsistence. Varinas and Pedraza are supplied with butcher's meat from Merida, at a low price, and of an excellent quality.

The temperature of Merida is so extremely variable, that all the changes of the four seasons are frequently experienced in the course of a single day. Nevertheless, the inhabitants affirm, that neither the cold nor heat is ever so intense as to prove inconvenient; and that silken or woollen stuffs may be worn indifferently all the year round: but they cannot deny that the variations of temperature are sometimes so very sudden, as to give rise to diseases. The west wind is particularly dreaded by the inhabitants; as it never blows without leaving traces of its noxious influence. Rains fall during every season of the year; but they are more especially abundant from March to November.

The city of Merida is the see of a bishop and chapter. It possesses a college and seminary, in which are educated priests of the Romish church; and where boys are taught those branches of knowledge suited to their rank and condition in life. A rector and sub-rector preside over all the schools in this seminary, under the immediate controul of the bishop.

The inhabitants lately petitioned his Catholic Majesty to allow them to establish an university; but though hitherto the prayer of their petition has not been granted, it is highly probable that their efforts will eventually be crowned with success.

Exclusive of the cathedral, there are various churches and chapels of ease, the number of which is proportioned to that of the inhabitants. The orders of St. Dominic, St. Augustine, and St. Claire, have each their respective convents. The number of the inhabitants of Merida, is estimated at eleven thousand, including slaves and persons of all descriptions. The whites of this city are characterised by great frankness of disposition, solid sense, and a taste for literature. Labour is not considered, by any class, as a degradation. The whites devote themselves to agriculture, the rearing of cattle, or enter into the church. Persons of colour engage in useful occupations, which evince equally their intelligence and application. They manufacture stuffs of cotton and wool, which are in great request, being generally preferred to European linens. With the wool of the country, they work carpets of an ell in length, and more than half an ell in width. These are ornamented with flowers, and

dyed with indiginous plants of various colours, equally beautiful and durable as those of our most celebrated fabrics. After having mentioned the industry of the inhabitants, it is scarcely necessary to add, that they are generally in affluent circumstances. The latitude of Merida is 8° 10′; its longitude 73° 45′.—Its distance from Maracaybo is eighty leagues south; from Carraccas one hundred and forty leagues south-west, and from Varinas twenty-five leagues also to the south-west.

The city of Truxillo is situated between two mountains. The air is here very salubrious, but the water employed for domestic purposes, though light and clear, is impregnated with metallic particles, which occasion those swellings in the throat usually termed goitres, without, however, producing any bad effect upon the general health. The soil is extremely fertile, and yields, with little cultivation, sugar, cocoa, indigo, coffee, and in general all the productions of the torrid zone, as well as some of those of our own temperate climates. The wheat, which is raised in this district in great abundance, is of a superior quality, and the flour differs little from that of Europe; it affords to the cultivator a profitable article of commerce.

Agriculture is not their only occupation. Several of them earn a subsistence by rearing sheep and goats, which are of a larger species, and their flesh more delicate, than in any other part of the province. Their cheeses are also preferred to those made at other dairies. The extreme attention they pay to washing and preparing the wool, enables them to manufacture several fabrics, for which they always find a ready market and receive a good price.

The women, who are more industrious at Truxillo than elsewhere, apply themselves to making different kinds of sweatmeats, a great many of which are sold throughout the province. This species of traffic, though apparently trifling, nevertheless preserves many of the lower classes of society in Truxillo, from that extreme wretchedness, which is but too observable among the same orders in all the other cities.

There is some commercial intercourse kept up between Truxillo and Maracaybo, by means of the lake which is twenty-five leagues to the west of that city; but their greatest trade is with Carora, to which place they send the hides of their goats and sheep, in order to be prepared. The communication, however, with this last place, is attended with great inconvenience, because, being obliged to cross the plains of Llonay, which are extremely unhealthy, unless the journey be performed with uncommon speed, the traveller is almost certain of being attacked with a malignant fever of the most dangerous nature.

There is nothing remarkable in the public buildings of this

city; the parish church is constructed with little taste, but is a solid and decent edifice. A chapel of ease is attached to it, called *Calvaire*. There is also a monastery of Dominicans, another of Franciscans, and a society of female Dominicans, who have devoted themselves to a life of celibacy. Each of the sisters labours in solitude at various kinds of fancy works, which are much admired and eagerly purchased, on account of the extreme delicacy and beauty of the execution.

At Truxillo, there is likewise an hospital, dedicated to our lady of Chiquinquira; and a cabildo, for the administration of justice and police.

The distance of this city from Carraccas is a hundred and five leagues to the north; from Merida twenty leagues to the south; and from Guanare thirty leagues to the south-east.

The district of Varinas, which was only detached from Maracaybo, and erected into a separate government, in 1787, has been long famous in Europe on account of the fancied superiority of its tobacco. This opinion, however, seems to have originated altogether from prejudice, as it is inferior in every respect to that which is raised in many other places, particularly in Cumanacoa, in the province of Cumana. Nevertheless, the opinion of its superiority is so prevalent, that every cargo of tobacco imported into Amsterdam, or Hamburg, under any other name than that of Varinas, is sold at twenty-five per cent. less, whatever may be its quality.

The Spaniards, availing themselves of this prejudice, ship for the European market most of their tobacco, in whatever province it may have been raised, under this denomination.

Favoured with a fertile soil, and happily situated, the province of Varinas carries on a considerable traffic. Sugar, cotton, coffee, indigo, and in general all the fruits of the torrid zone, thrive exceedingly, and are of an excellent quality. The inhabitants, who for a long time considered the soil of this province as only suited to the raising of tobacco, confined themselves to its culture; but this prejudice is now happily done away, and has given place to a more enlarged system. They send their commodities, for the most part, by water to Guiana. These are shipped on the river Portugaise, five leagues above the city, at a place termed Torunos. In Varinas, they also rear black cattle and mules, which are either exported by the Oronooko, or consumed in the country.

The flourishing state of this province, which it would be easy to invade by means of the navigable rivers emptying themselves into the Oroonoko, induced the government in 1803, to establish a militia, and to appoint a garrison for the city of Varinas.

This city is very healthy, though Reaumur's thermometer seldom stands below twenty-four degrees. The inhabitants are

reckoned to amount to ten thousand. Its only public edifices are a parish church and an hospital. The governor enjoys the same salary as those of the other provinces.

San-Jayme is a very insignificant city, whether we consider its population or the trade which it carries on. Its situation is more singular than agreeable. It stands near the confluence of several rivers, which, after uniting for about twelve leagues, flow into the river Apure. Thus surrounded by rivers on all sides, it has nothing to protect it against their annual inundations, but a mount of sand on which it is situated. Hence the inhabitants cannot frequently, during these inundations, either leave or enter their houses without the assistance of canoes. This city is in 7° 50′ N. lat. and lies seventy-five leagues south from Carraccas.

The city of San-Fernando d'Apure, owes its existence to the inhabitants of Guanare, having extended their flocks over a vast extent of country. In proportion as its population increased, those who found the land preoccupied, turned their views towards the south, and fixed upon the right bank of the celebrated river Apure, where the richness of the pasture completely answered their expectation.

When their numbers became augmented, they requested to be formed into an independent parish, and shortly after, that their village might be honoured with the privileges and the title of a city. This request, however singular, was acceded to. The property of the inhabitants, consists chiefly of flocks of black cattle and mules; they raise very few provisions of any kind. The temperature is here very hot, but the situation is healthy, and the water extremely good. The houses, without being elegant, are well built, and the church, without having any pretensions to grandeur of design, is a decent and convenient edifice. The population of this city is reckoned at six thousand.

CHAP. VIII.

DIVISION OF GUIANA.—THE RIVER OROONOKO.—IMPORTANCE OF GUIANA; ITS EXTENT AND POPULATION.—LOWER GUIANA.—UPPER GUIANA.—ST. THOMAS, &c.

ALL the space included between the river Oroonoko to the north, that of the Amazons to the south, the sea to the west, and the 70° of longitude from the meridian of Paris, is strictly that which is designated under the name of Guiana. The coast from the mouth of the Amazons to that of the Oroonoko, occupies an extent of a hundred and twenty leagues, and is possessed by four different powers. The Portugueze occupy the southern

part, which, previous to the treaty of peace concluded with France in 1801, extended from the mouth of the Amazons to cape North, to the east of the island of Carpori.

According to this treaty, the limits of Portugueze and French Guiana are marked by the river Carapana, which discharges itself into the Amazons, in 20′ north latitude, above fort Macafa. These boundaries are marked out by the course of the river to its source, whence they take a direction towards the great chain of mountains, the sinuosities of which they follow to the nearest point of Rio-Blanco, between the 2 and 3° of north latitude.

Portugueze Guiana, therefore, lies altogether on the left bank of the Amazons, and is bounded on the north by the French possessions as far as the 55° of longitude. On the west, the Portugueze territory borders upon that belonging to Spain. The equinoctial line, according to stipulations, ought to mark the limits of the respective possessions of these two crowns; but the Portugueze have so encroached upon the Spanish territory, that their establishments extend thirty-two leagues north beyond the line; since Isle Saint-Joseph, and the mountain of Gloria del Cocui, are considered as constituting the present boundaries.

French Guiana is bounded on the south by the river Carapana, which mingles its waters with those of the Amazons; on the north by the river Maroni; on the east by the sea; and on the west by the Spanish possessions.

Surinam, Essequibo, and Demerraa, belong to the Dutch, and are bounded on the east by the sea; on the south by the river Maroni; on the west by Spanish Guiana; and on the north by the river Essequibo: but on this side they have extended their settlements as far as cape Nassau.

Spanish Guiana is bounded on the east by the sea, from cape Nassau to the mouth of the Oroonoko, the distance between which is about thirty leagues. The river Oroonoko bounds it on the north for the extent of a hundred and fifty leagues from the sea, at which point it becomes its western boundary, as it turns back towards the south for the space of a hundred leagues, where it receives the waters of Guaviari: from thence, the Oroonoko pursuing an easterly course, serves no longer as a boundary to Spanish Guiana, which in this part has for its confines the Portugueze possessions.

Before entering, however, upon a description of Spanish Guiana, which seems destined from the fertility of its soil, and its advantageous situation, to become a flourishing state, it is proper that I should here give some account of the celebrated river Oroonoko. The sources of the Oroonoko are as little known to the Spaniards, as those of the Nile were to Europeans, and even to the Africans themselves, before the publication of

Bruce's travels. Some geographers, among whom is M. Bonne, deduces its origin from lake Parima, situated to the south of the capital of Guiana, while others derive its source from the mountains lying to the north-west of the lake already mentioned. This is the opinion most generally entertained, and apparently deserving of most credit; nevertheless, it is very difficult to arrive at complete certainty on this head, since the native Indians render it very difficult to explore the country. M. Humboldt had a proof of this in his journey in 1800, to Rio-Negro. When he had arrived at the place where the Casiquiari emerges from the Oroonoko, he was anxious to explore the true sources of this celebrated river, but he found that impracticable, and was obliged to rest satisfied with the information he received from some Indians. The mountains termed by the natives Ib i noco, give rise to several rivulets, which, uniting at eight or ten leagues from their source, form a river, which, in the course of five hundred leagues that it traverses, before reaching the sea, receives the waters of an infinite number of tributary streams, to which it owes the honourable denomination of a river, which, geographers, as well as the natives, call Oroonoko.

It is conjectured, that the Oroonoko proceeds, for the first hundred leagues, from north to south, leaving lake Parima at the distance of sixty leagues from its left bank. From the number of streams which flow into it during this part of its course, it acquires the magnitude and rapidity of a very large river. From the Esmeraldes to San Fernando of Atahapa, the Oroonoko runs from east to north-west. Here the river Casiquiari forms a communication between the Oroonoko and the Amazons, by means of the Rio-Negro.

The Oroonoko, from its source to the Atures, traverses a country wholly inhabited by Indian tribes, who will probably remain long unsubdued, from their remote situation. Before reaching the Atures, the Oroonoko runs to the north nearly as far as the mouth of the river Meta, from whence it bends to the north-east, and at last taking an easterly direction, pursues an undeviating course towards the sea.

The *Los Saltos de Atures*, are immense cataracts formed by rocks in the bed of the Oroonoko, over which its waters, augmented by the rivers Guaviari and Vichada, dash with inconceivable fury, making a tremendous noise, and throwing up immense columns of white spray or foam. No vessel, however small, can pass these cataracts. The mariners have therefore no other resource, either in ascending or descending this river, but to run their vessel on shore, and drag it to a point beyond the reach of danger.

Beneath these cataracts, the Oroonoko receives on the east

side, the river Abacuna, and on the west the river Bichao; the Meta, which is a very considerable river, flows into the Oroonoko thirty leagues below the cataracts of Atures, and a hundred and twenty-five leagues from St. Thomas, the capital of Guiana.

The navigation of the superior part of the Oroonoko, is far from being so safe and easy, as the immense magnitude of the river might induce us to suppose; for not only do numerous islands obstruct its channel, frequently causing it to shift its bed, but it is full of numerous rocks of different sizes, some of which are on a level with the water, while others remain at a greater or less depth, according to the state of the season; it is, besides, subject to sudden and violent gusts of wind: all these circumstances render it evident, that to navigate the Oroonoko with safety, skilful pilots are not only necessary, but that the vessels ought to be of a certain construction and capacity. What is here said, must, however, be considered as applying to the navigation from the port of Guiana on ascending the Oroonoko, or from the mouth of the Meta in descending towards the capital. As the Oroonoko, for the distance of forty leagues from the shore, is every where interspersed with numerous small islands, it discharges its waters into the sea by means of fifty mouths, seven of which are only navigable; of these last, that which is generally preferred, is termed *la Bouche des Vaisseaux*, because it is through it that vessels usually pass and repass, which carry on a trade with Guiana.

Nothing can be better suited to captivate the admiration of the traveller, than the scenery presented to his view, when sailing on the Oroonoko. At one time he beholds immense and lofty forests, stored with various species of birds, not less striking by the splendour of their plumage, than by the melody of their notes. Asses and monkies of different kinds, greatly contribute also to enliven the enchanting prospect by their cries, their tricks, and their gambols. Here savage man lives in perfect harmony with the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field, and enjoys in common with them the productions of the earth. At other times are seen extensive plains covered with the richest pasture, which relieves the eye fatigued by contemplating such magnificent forests. In short, every thing concurs to excite in the mind of man, the highest admiration of the order and harmony of nature, and to elevate him in imagination, as it were above, himself. The pleasure experienced in viewing a succession of such prospects, is, however, allayed by the necessity of constantly sleeping on the hard ground, by exposure to insects, rocks, and storms, to rains and noxious dews, by the danger of encountering wild beasts, and of perishing for want.

Hitherto, the Oroonoko has been so little known, that it is

generally ranked as the last in the scale of rivers, though it appears to be very problematical, whether any other be entitled to dispute with it the superiority. This opinion receives additional support from M. Humboldt.

It is true, that most geographical writers consider the Amazons, in point of magnitude, as superior to every river on the surface of the globe; but M. Humboldt informs us, in a letter written by him, in 1800, to the captain-general of Carraccas, on returning from his excursion to the Rio-Negro, that though upon comparing his estimate of the Oroonoko, with the one made by the celebrated M. Condamine on that of the Amazons, it results that the latter is by far more extensive than the former at its mouth, yet that the Oroonoko merits the same consideration as to the volume of water it contains in the interior of the country; for at the distance of two hundred leagues from the sea, its channel, without any intervening island, measures from two thousand five-hundred to three thousand toises.

The breadth of the Oroonoko at the capital of Guiana, is 3,500 toises. Its depth, when measured at the same place, by an order from his Catholic majesty in 1734, was found to be sixty-five fathoms, during the month of March, when the waters were at the lowest. With so much velocity and force does it discharge its waters into the sea, that they are perfectly fresh at more than thirty leagues from its mouth, and at more than forty leagues their colour is distinguishable from that of the sea.

The Oroonoko, like the Nile, and many other rivers, experiences an annual and periodical inundation. This inundation uniformly begins in April, and terminates in August. During the whole of September, it remains altogether stationary, and presents a spectacle highly sublime, and worthy of admiration.

The usual increase of the Oroonoko is thirteen fathoms near St. Thomas. It is even evident at the distance of three hundred and fifty leagues from its mouth, and gradually increases in proportion as it approaches the sea. This increase is not uniformly the same every year, but the difference seldom exceeds more than one fathom. In the country they affirm, that there is an extraordinary increase of one fathom every twenty-five years.

Early in October the inundation of the Oroonoko begins to decrease, and its waters gradually return to their former channel. Towards the end of February it falls to its minimum, and remains stationary till the beginning of April. During this interval the turtles leave the river in order to deposit their eggs on the shores; the humidity of which, aided by the heat of the sun, contributes greatly to develop the principles of fecundation.

The waters of the Oroonoko are potable; the inhabitants

attribute to them many medical virtues, and affirm that they possess the power of dispelling wens, and such like tumours.

The tide, which runs very strong at the mouths of the Oroonoko, is so much diminished in force by the numerous channels through which it enters, that it becomes scarcely perceptible before it reaches St. Thomas, excepting only during summer, and when a strong wind blows from the sea.

The Oroonoko abounds with a great variety of different species of fish, so as amply to repay those who pursue fishing as their principal occupation.

Many of these fishes are of a different species from those in the European waters which bear the same names, though they somewhat resemble them in external appearance.

I shall not here enter into a minute enumeration of all the different varieties of fishes found in the Oroonoko, as such details more properly belong to a work on natural history, but content myself with describing those to which the Spaniards give the name of *curbinata* and *caraïbe*.

The first, which never exceeds two pounds in weight, is of an excellent flavour, and abounds in the Oroonoko. But it is not so much as an article of subsistence that it is valued, as on account of two stones situated in its head; exactly in the place which is usually occupied by the brain. These stones, which are regarded as a specific in cases of retention of urine, sell for their weight in gold. The dose is three grains of this stone, well pulverized, mingled in a cup-full of water or wine: this is said to produce an instantaneous effect; it is even affirmed, that any excess in this dose will occasion incontinence of urine. These stones are of the shape of an almond, and resemble in colour, mother of pearl.

The second, which is smaller than the *curbinata*, attacks with great ferocity every animal, whether dead or alive, which falls within its reach. It even wounds the legs of any one who may happen to proceed a short way into the river, and these injuries are supposed to be attended with very serious consequences. The name *caraïbe* has been given to this fish, on account of its ferocious habits.

I cannot, however, so slightly pass over the amphibious animals which frequent the Oroonoko, since they are distinguished by many peculiarities from those of the same class in Europe.

The *cayman*, which many naturalists confound with the alligator and the crocodile, is very different from these two species, as has been fully demonstrated by the Abbé Bonaterre, in the Cyclopedie Methodique. Of a much larger size than the crocodile and even than the alligator, it is also more sluggish and stupid. It would likewise be more dangerous than the crocodile, if it made the most of its strength. Like all the animals of this

species, it is of the lizard form, and from fifteen to eighteen feet in length. Its mouth, which is extremely large, is furnished with a double range of sharp teeth, a little separated from each other. Its eyes are prominent, and the animal usually keeps on a level with the surface of the water; it is thus enabled to view every object, without being observed in its turn. Its skin is covered with strong sharp scales, impenetrable by a musket-ball. It devours vast numbers of fishes, and is regarded with great terror by the inhabitants. The Indians eat its flesh, which is white, but of an insipid taste; it is caught by means of large iron hooks. Its teeth are employed by the Indians as an ornament for the neck and arms; they are also regarded as an antidote to certain poisons, and as an alexipharmic in general. The teeth, and other parts of its body are exhibited in a pulverized state, in the dose of twelve grains of either the one or the other, or six grains of each, as an antispasmodic, and repeated according to the necessity of the case. A drop of the gall insinuated into the inner angle of the eye, is regarded as a powerful remedy in cases of cataract and dimness of sight. It produces at first a sensation of heat, which soon, however, abates.

The fat of the cayman when melted, is employed to cleanse the ears. It is supposed to produce the same effect on the mensenteric veins, and on that account is prescribed to those who eat earth, in the dose of a cup-full in a quantity of mucilage.

The guana is very common in the Oroonoko. It is of the lizard tribe, about two feet and a half long, and of a green colour; it is furnished with a row of sharp points along its back, like the cayman, which gives it a horrible aspect. It frequently remains on trees ashore, but retreats into the water on the slightest appearance of danger. The Indians, as well as the Spaniards, regard them as a luxury, equal to that of the finest chicken. The female lays from twenty-five to thirty eggs, about the size of a nut, which are of a yellow colour, and covered with a pellicle or membrane, instead of a shell; they are usually eaten roasted, in the same manner as the eggs of domestic fowls.

Another animal which abounds in the Oroonoko, and the neighbouring rivers, is termed by the Caribs *capigua*, by the Indians *chiquire*, and by the Spaniards *quardatinajas*. Its muzzle resembles that of a sheep, its skin is red, and the tail so short, as scarcely to be perceptible. These animals are eaten by the inhabitants on fast days, from the idea that they partake more of the nature of fish, than of that of land animals. They always swim in shoals, and occasionally raise their heads above water in order to respire. They feed upon the herbs which grow on the banks of the lakes and rivers, and are regarded by

the Indians as a delicious morsel; they consequently kill them in considerable numbers by means of their arrows.

The lapa, which is another amphibious animal, common to Guiana and most parts of Terra-Firma, is called by the Indians *tamenu*. It is about the size of a terrier dog. Its hair is red, and variegated with whitish spots. Its flesh is extremely tender, and resembles that of a sucking pig. It feeds upon the herbage and fruits growing on the banks of the rivers which it inhabits, but on the least noise, retires to the waters. It is esteemed a great delicacy by the South Americans. An animal to which the Spaniards have given the appellation of *water-dog*, is also found in the Oroonoko; it belongs to the genus Phoca, and much resembles the beaver. Its head is about the size of that of a middle-sized dog, and its ears exactly similar to those of the beaver; its tail is long, and the fore feet of the same shape, but somewhat larger than those of a fox; its hind feet are flat and membranous, and the skin soft and of a whitish colour. It inhabits holes, which it scoops out on the banks of rivers, from which, however, it frequently proceeds a considerable distance into the country. This animal does not live solely upon herbs and fruits, but devours a considerable number of fishes, which it catches with inconceivable dexterity.

A small amphibious animal known by the name of liron, is also frequently met with in the rivers and marshes of South America. It is covered with thick soft white hair, with black bands so disposed, as greatly to add to the beauty of its appearance. Its head is small, like that of the dormouse, and is furnished with whiskers like a cat. Its feet are membranous, and its tail prehensile, and destitute of hair from the middle to the extremity. This animal is provided with a sack or pouch under its belly, in which it carries its young.

The last of the amphibia, which we shall here notice, is the *manati*, or sea-cow. It is ill proportioned and of a hideous appearance. It nearly equals an ox in magnitude, and like it, ruminates its food. The eyes of this animal are extremely small, and its organs of hearing almost imperceptible; it is not provided with fins, which forces it frequently to leave the water, in order to respire. Its hide is much thicker than that of an ox, and is employed for the purpose of making thongs for oxen, horse whips, &c. To its breast are attached two small arms or paws without hoofs, which assist its loco-motive powers when on shore. The female carries under these arms her young, which usually consist of a male and female. She presses them against her breast, and nourishes them with milk until they attain sufficient strength to follow her on foot.

The flesh of the manati is extremely fat and tender; the

greatest part of it is convertible into good lamp oil; the Indians take them in the same manner as the whales are caught at Spitsbergen.

Whether we consider the extent of Guiana, or the fertility of its soil, it is questioned, if Spain, among all her foreign dominions, has a settlement superior to it in importance. Spanish Guiana, from the mouths of the Oroonoko to its junction with the Portugueze territory, extends overa space of more than four hundred leagues. Its breadth for eighty leagues eastward, does not exceed thirty leagues, in which direction it is bounded by the Dutch possessions, but it afterwards widens to more than one hundred and fifty leagues.

The population of this immense territory, including persons of all descriptions, is only estimated at thirty-four thousand, of which nineteen thousand four hundred and twenty-five Indians, are under the jurisdiction of the missionaries, six thousand five hundred and seventy-five reside in the capital, and the remaining eight thousand are scattered through the different villages.

This territory is divided into Upper and Lower Guiana; and the capital has been adopted as the point of division, though the river Caroni seems better calculated for this purpose, as it forms the western boundary of a portion of Guiana, that is insulated by having the Oroonoko to the north, the sea to the east, and the river Essequibo, to the south. This district intersected in all directions by numerous rivers, which have for time immemorial contributed to increase the quantity of vegetable mould on its surface, is surpassed, in point of fertility, by no other portion of territory throughout America.

The missionaries who were first deputed to civilize the Indians by the introduction of Christianity, began their operations in this part of Guiana. But though the erection of twenty-seven villages to the east of the river Caroni, attests the success of these early missionaries, they have never ventured to approach nearer to the coast than thirty leagues, from its being inhabited by Caribs, the most ferocious of all the Indian tribes, who have never failed to massacre the preachers of Christianity sent to convert them. There can be no doubt that the ferocity of the Caribs would have in time yielded to the efforts of the missionaries, had they been left to the impulse of their own feelings; but the Dutch of Surinam, who are interested in extending their commerce into Spanish Guiana, have uniformly endeavoured to foment the hatred of the Caribs against the Spaniards, with a view to prevent the approach of the latter towards the coast. It is, in fact, certain, that Spanish Guiana, which in the best charts is made to occupy thirty leagues from the mouth of the Oroonoko to cape Nassau, never extended so far in that direc

natives, who have uniformly asserted their independence, and, never having been either converted, reduced, or subjugated, continue still as free as they were before the discovery of the New World.

The Dutch have always strenuously endeavoured to maintain a strict alliance and friendship with the Caribs. In this they succeeded more readily, as they never inculcated on them the rigid and troublesome morality of the Spaniards, but, on the contrary, made every allowance for the difference of their manners and habits. It is even affirmed, that on all occasions they never failed to foment their hatred against the Spaniards, and to attach them to their own interest: what appears to prove the truth of these assertions, is the liberty that the Caribs have granted them of keeping a military guard in their territory, with a view to protect the contraband traffic which they carry on.

The Spaniards of Guiana, and the Dutch of Surinam, are therefore far from living on terms of amity with each other. The Spaniards affirm that the Dutch do not respect the boundaries betweeen the possessions of the two countries, but are continually encroaching on their territory; that they injure the Spanish commerce in Guiana, by the constant traffic which they carry on; that they continually excite the Caribs to revolt; and that they prevent their subjugation by the arms with which they supply them.

The Dutch in their turn ascribe the desertion of their slaves in Surinam to the Spaniards, who, they assert, never fail to afford them an asylum in Guiana. It must be admitted, that for a long time the Spanish government favoured the slaves of Surinam, who fled to them for protection, more out of hatred to the Dutch than from principles of humanity. They have even peopled with these fugitives two very considerable villages on the banks of the river Caura, into which are also received the Indians, whom the Caribs force to fly, in order to avoid becoming the slaves of the Dutch. From such a heterogeneous population, without civilization, it is greatly to be feared, that sooner or later the public tranquillity may be endangered.

These, and similar complaints have continued to be made by the respective governments for the last seven or eight years, and different treaties have been entered into, with a view to remedy such evils in future. One of the stipulations is, that the Spaniards shall either send back, or pay the full value of every slave who takes such refuge in their dominions. If this condition continue to be faithfully executed, it will greatly tend to preserve harmony between the two countries.

That tract of country lying to the east of the river Caroni, from about a league above St. Thomas, is included under Upper

Guiana, and is placed under the care of a Franciscan mission. If we are to estimate the zeal of these missionaries by the progress of Christianity among the Indian tribes, we must suppose it to have been very lukewarm indeed; but when we reflect upon the obstacles they had to surmount, the difficulties they had to encounter, and, above all, the indifference, or rather the decided repugnance of these tribes to receive the light of Christianity, it must, we think, be admitted that the Franciscans have done as much on the upper banks of the Oroonoko, as it was possible for man to atchieve under such circumstances. While we thus do justice to the zeal of these spiritual guides in the propagation of their faith, we cannot but lament that they had not endeavoured to establish among their converts habits of industry and a love of labour; instead of which, if they only muttered over a few prayers at stated hours, they were suffered to pass the rest of their time in sloth and idleness. If any of them, more active than the rest, raised a few provisions round his hut, he was deemed a prodigy of industry. The consequence of such an erroneous system has been, that on the richest land in the universe, we only behold a few scattered and wretched habitations, situated thirty leagues to the south of the capital of Guiana. Here the proprietors raise some cotton, a small quantity of sugar-canes, and some of the culinary vegetables of the country. The land in this neighbourhood is well suited to the culture of tobacco, if we may judge by the excellent quality of that which is raised in the vicinity of Saint Anthonio Uspata, on account of the king.

The city of Saint Thomas, situated on the right bank of the Oroonoko, is the residence of a governor, who enjoys a salary of three thousand piastres. He enjoys all the rights, and exercises all the functions of the other governors, but subject in the military, political, and financial departments, to the controul of the captain-general of Carraccas.

The bishop of Guiana also resides in this capital; but there is not one decent edifice dedicated to religious purposes. Divine worship is performed in a mass-house, of which the most insignificant village would be ashamed as a parish church. The bishop has made many representations on this subject to the Spanish government, which have hitherto been wholly fruitless, and, with the limited income he enjoys, nothing is left for him to do but to breathe his ardent wishes for the erection of an edifice worthy of the grandeur of the object to which it is set apart.

The police of the capital of Guiana is administered by a *cabildo*, the only one in the province, consisting of two *alcades*, an *alguazil*, an *alferez real*, and a *notary*.

In the province of Guiana there are only three curés, Saint

Thomas, Saint Rose of Maruante to the east, and Caycara a hundred leagues to the west.

The air is extremely pure and healthy in Saint Thomas. The breezes are regular from November to the month of May; but during the rest of the year they are frequently interrupted by calms; the streets are regular, and all paved; the houses, like those of Carraccas, are mostly built of lime and sand, with terraces above, where the inhabitants sleep during the hot season. Storms are here very frequent during the months of August, September, and October, but they are never visited by earthquakes. The tythe throughout Guiana was farmed in 1803, at 4,000 piastres. Now, supposing the farmer to gain fifty per cent. which, added to the former sum, makes 6,000, the annual value of the exports, &c. throughout the province of Guiana, will amount to 60,000 piastres. It requires little penetration to estimate the share which can be appropriated to commerce.

It is true, that in this calculation the tythe of the profits of the flocks of the missionaries are not included, because they are exempted from the tax. It is estimated that they possess cattle to the amount of a hundred and fifty thousand, which constitutes part of the riches of Guiana.

From 1791 to 1794 there were exported from the port of Guiana ten thousand three hundred and eighty oxen, and three thousand a hundred and forty mules, all either bred in the province itself, or brought from Varinas; in return, was imported two hundred Blacks, and 349,448 piastres in specie.

From 1791 to 1795 the silver exported to

Europe, amounted to - -	25,203 piastres.
In commodities - - -	363,397
Total	388,600

At present this commerce is reduced to less than one half.

Toward the conclusion of 1803 there were thirty small vessels employed in the coasting trade between Guiana and the other colonies; and this trade was chiefly in the hands of some Catalonians, but the indolence of the inhabitants, and other circumstances, rendered their speculations in a great measure abortive.

One great obstacle to the exertion of industry in Guiana is the difficulty of communication between the different parts of the province, owing to the numerous rivers with which it is every where intersected, and the want of good roads.

The port of St. Thomas is likewise subject to continual injuries from the shooting-in of the earth, which exposes the houses to be inundated, particularly during the months of July, August, and September, but which might easily be remedied by the

erection of a solid quay on that part called *la Almeda*. What would still farther improve this harbour, would be to blow up the large rocks, which at present render the anchorage ground unsafe and incommodious. The most proper season for performing the operation would be the beginning of February, when the waters of the Oroonoko are at the lowest. Another improvement, suggested by the inhabitants, would be to render more navigable the channel of Mamo, which is seven leagues below the capital, since in its present state no vessel can sail through it from the month of January to that of April.

With a view of better protecting Guiana from foreign attacks, the Spanish government has placed the capital at the immense distance of ninety leagues from the mouth of the river; but, in my opinion, this purpose would have been more effectually accomplished by placing it nearer the sea; since an enemy in this case could not have penetrated into the country till they had first rendered themselves masters of it. Whether we consider the subject in this point of view, or with respect to trade and navigation, it must, I think, appear evident, that a worse situation could not have been chosen.

The voyage from that mouth of the Oroonoko termed *la Bouche des Vaisseaux* to Saint Thomas's, generally takes from fifteen to twenty or thirty days; and if we add to the time thus lost, the risks to be encountered, it must be allowed that there are few navigators who would not prefer making a voyage to Europe, rather than undergo the danger, anxiety, and delay attendant on the navigation of the Oroonoko.

END OF DEPON'S TRAVELS.

EXPLANATION

Of the Map of the City of CARRACCAS, in South America, the Capital of the Provinces of Venezuela, Maracaybo, Varinas, Guiana, and the Island of Marguerite.

A THE Cathedral
B Parish of St. Paul
C ——of Altagracia
D ——of Candelaria
E Church of St. Maurice
F —— of Pastora
G —— of Trinity, & Chapel of Candelaria
H Parish of St. Rosalia
Y Monastery of St. Hiacinthe
I —— of St. François
K —— of Mercy
L —— of Carmilites
M —— of Conception
N Oratory of St. Philippe
—— of Neri
O New Church, left unfinished
P Convent of Capuchins
Q Hospital of St. Paul
R —— of St. Lazarus
S Convent and Chapel of the Daughters of Charity
T College and University
U Hermitage of Calvaire

a Placa Mayor, or principal square
b Square of Candelaria
c ——of St. Paul
d ——of Trinity
f ——of Lion
g Small Sq. of St. Lazarus
h ——of Pastora
l ——of Altagracia
m——of Hiacinthe
n ——of St. Philippe of Nervi
o ——of Rosalia
p Cemetery of the Cathedral
q Play-house
r House building for the residence of the Captain-General
t Military Hospital
u Seminary of Female Education

1 Archbishopric
2 Town-house
3 Edifices building for public offices
4 Barracks of St. Anne
5 Barracks of the Militia
6 Convent of Misericorde
7 Bivonac
8 Shops let out by the city
10 Custom-house of Pastora
11 Road from the Valley of Pastora
12 Road from Petare
13 House of Prayer
14 Houses let out
15 State Prison
16 House of Correction
17 Prison of Inquisition
18 —— of the Treasury
19 House of the Royal Audience
20 —— Royal, Administration.
21 Bridges
22 Public Fountains
23 Reservoirs of the Fountains

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